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THE PUNJAB'S PRICE FOR FREEDOM

THE deliberate press campaign designed to con-ince the British public that the end of British ule in India has thrown the entire country into state of anarchy is as wicked as it is mislead-ng. Every incident in the Punjab tragedy indica-ive of local breakdowns in administration is xaggerated and distorted to give the impression of ation-wide collapse. When the Boundary Force, lways intended by the Joint Defence Council for emporary use, is disbanded, so that mixed units an be replaced by larger formations of a single ommunity under the separate control of the two Dominion Governments, the *Daily Express* at nce, and typically, headlines "*India turns on ritish officers,*" and suggests that the changed omposition of the force to deal with the dis-urbances, agreed to by the Joint Defence Coun-il under the chairmanship of Lord Mountbatten, due to accusations of partiality made against ritish officers by the Indians. No effort is pared to hold up the Governments of two Mem-er States of the British Commonwealth to con-empt and ridicule and to label them after three eeks as unfit to rule.

But over vast areas of the sub-continent there is alm. Even in Calcutta, the danger spot of engal, there has been only one riot since ugust 15th. Bombay is quiet and so are the owns of the United Provinces and Bihar, many f which contain strong Muslim minorities. In e South there has been no disturbance. As a hole the 400 million people of India have ccepted the sudden and most tremendous hanges in their long history with tranquillity d remarkable restraint. The exception to the derly transfer of power is the frontier region of e Punjab. There, as was always anticipated, has been impossible to provide any arrange-ent to satisfy the Sikhs. Their population, operty and holy shrines are distributed in such way as to make it inevitable that powerful ements of the community would find themselves either side of the boundary.

The Sikhs were bitter at not having a State of eir own. It was worse that a million of them ould be compelled to live in Pakistan among their traditional Muslim enemies. For the Sikhs to register a protest by arson and pillage is not uncommon. More fanatical, more courageous and more determined than any other sect in India, they set out to destroy the Muslims on the Indian side of the border. As reports reached Pakistan of their violence, retaliatory measures were taken by Muslims against Sikhs, until on both sides of the frontier, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims became engaged in conflict. The riots will not end until either the fires of Sikh passion die down or superior military force is applied to the troubled districts.

In the meanwhile there is some danger that disaffection may spread in the Punjab. This is by no means the fault of the Boundary Force, now disbanded, or of the two Dominion Governments. The Boundary Force did a magnificent job against overwhelming difficulties, and without them the slaughter would have been far greater. That, here and there, the communal ties of the troops employed broke down their impartiality was not surprising in view of the emotions to which they must have been subjected. The Dominion Governments cannot be held responsible because it was always inherent in any division of the Punjab that the Sikhs would be provoked, and the task of controlling the now inflamed Muslims and Sikhs, grouped into marauding bands, is not easily accomplished. Now that the small Boundary Force is to be replaced by the full weight of the Dominion armies there is a reasonable chance that order will be restored within a few weeks. Certainly there is no lack of the co-operation required between the respective Premiers to achieve this end.

Suffering is great and many thousands have already lost their lives. But that is no justification for the silly suggestion in some newspapers that the Indian settlement was a mistake. If a settlement had not been made, instead of trouble in the centre of the Punjab, there would have been bloodshed and famine over all India, as the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs combined against the British and afterwards set upon each other to divide the spoils. It is also an error to describe the thousands moving in opposite directions across the frontier as all being refugees fleeing before the terror. The majority are those who decided from the outset to migrate to the country of their preference. The present massacres are a ghastly by-product of painful rebirth in India; but they are much less serious than, say, the 1943 Bengal famine (barely reported in England), when one and a half million died. In Bengal to-day outbreaks have been curbed by the patient efforts of Mr. Gandhi. In the Punjab the Congress and League High Commands are equally well intentioned, and once they have had time to bring the necessary force into action, there is no reason to doubt that they will pass the first test of their rule.

Conscripts or Crusaders

The shadow of coal fell heavily on Southport. The opening days of the Trades Union Congress showed that delegates were painfully aware that, unless coal production is increased, no plans for higher output from essential industries make sense; nor can American demands for exports of British coal, in order to retain more Ruhr coal for Germany and Italy, be met except at the cost of heavy general British unemployment. Yet the stoppages in Yorkshire, where the Grimethorpe miners refuse to accept what they regard as an unjust and arbitrary lengthening of their stint, still continue; the colliery clerks threaten to strike this week-end; and there is an unresolved deadlock between the National Coal Board and the National Union of Mineworkers on the question of Saturday shifts *versus* an eight-hour day.

Asserting that the Coal Board experts had themselves reported adversely on the Government's proposal to lengthen the working day by an extra half-hour, Mr. Arthur Horner went to the root of the matter when he said: "There is no power in heaven or hell that can make miners do things against their judgment." With scores of thousands of tons being lost in Yorkshire's output, and with recruitment for the mining industry showing ominous signs of flagging, the Government cannot afford to lose a single day in intervening in the deadlock between the N.C.B. and the N.U.M. If the miners cannot be driven, they must be given fresh incentives—monetary or psychological.

Unhappily, this issue, which relates not only to coal, but all " tough " industries, was submerged at Southport in the disinclination of the majority to approve any form of State-planned wage policy. Rather than face the need for special incentives in essential industries, Congress took refuge in a resolution giving the General Council a vague mandate to accept limited direction of labour subject to full safeguards for directed workers and equality of sacrifice by all classes., What this is to mean in practice is still not clear. Mr. Isaacs assured delegates that direction would be " reasonable and sympathetic "; it appears to be his intention to direct only workers who become unemployed, and, even so, not to draft them into jobs away from their homes. How direction on these lines is to make good the shortage of labour in undermanned industries, Mr. Isaacs did not explain. He can hardly imagine that conscription of persons not usefully occupied (for which, he said, he might use "full powers") is going to be practicable within the terms of " democratic planning."

If, then, the crisis is not to be met by universal conscription on wartime lines, what is the alternative? Only crusaders in a campaign to achieve the rebuilding of an economically viable Britain will dig the coal, man the iron foundries and speed the looms. Can Ministers galvanize such a crusade in our system of modified capitalism, in which remotely controlled workers still lack the feeling of responsibility to society but are shielded from the compulsion of hunger?

What Is Our Trade Policy ?

Next week's International Bank meeting, which brings Mr. Snyder to London, will also provide an opportunity for discussions between the British Government and Dominion representatives on the general policy of the Commonwealth towards the dollar crisis. Clearly there must be some measure of common agreement between the chief members of the sterling area on the extent to which there is to be retrenchment in purchases for which payment in dollars is required. It would be idle for Britain alone to forego American goods if the £600 millions of gold and foreign exchange held in London as a joint reserve for the sterling pool were exposed to a heavy drain through continued large Dominion buying in the dollar area. The Dominion Premiers have shown clearly that they appreciate this point. But if the Commonwealth as a whole is to be asked to do without American goods at the expense of standards of living, the Dominions are fully entitled to ask that planned efforts should be made by Britain to fill the gap. Is this the Government's conception of its " Emergency " trade policy? Notwithstanding Mr. Bevin's sudden and demagogic advocacy of the Empire Free Trade doctrine beloved by Lord Beaverbrook, indications are to the contrary. According to Mr. Chifley, the Australian Government has actually been requested to cut down Australian purchases from Britain. Does this mean that it is the intention to deny British products to the Dominions — and *a fortiori* to Europe — in order to have more British exports available for sale in the dollar area? That would be a policy of lunacy. It would involve the further distortion of British production into the manufacture of luxury specialities likely to appeal to the American consumer and it would render us increasingly vulnerable to any future slump in the United States. Surely commonsense dictates that instead of spending too much effort in fighting a way for our goods in the precarious U.S. market (there will always, of course, be a reasonable outlet in the U.S.A. for such products as Scottish whisky, fine tweeds and some classes of pottery), we should concentrate rather on endeavouring to supply the needs of those countries which can provide us with essential foodstuffs and raw materials without the necessity of our paying for them in dollars.

Palestine Partition

The salient facts about the United Nations Report on Palestine are first its unanimity on the need for an immediate termination of the Mandate, and secondly, the size of the majority which voted for partition. The Persian and the Indian delegates were of course bound to support an Arab solution; the Yugoslavs remained true to the traditional Communist line. But every member, who was free to study the problem objectively, accepted the analysis of the Peel Commission ten years ago and rejected Mr. Bevin's thesis that a Jewish commonwealth in part of Palestine is unjust and impracticable. The only surprise was the proposal to remove Western Galilee from the Jewish State. Though reasonable enough on ethnic grounds, this turns the map of Palestine into a jigsaw puzzle. The Commission, however, may be right in its decision, since partition should not be regarded as a means of permanently separating Jews and Arabs, but as the only way of terminating the Mandate and permitting the two peoples to work out what must be a common destiny. The report has inevitably recommended that Britain should carry out the transfer of power. But Mr. Attlee would be wise to accept the suggestion that responsibility should be shared in the interim period, and to state frankly that we cannot bear even a part of the burden for so long as two years. Indeed, the Assembly should be told that all British troops and officials will be out of Palestine within twelve months of its decision.

Level of German Industry

Whatever may be thought of its matter, the manner in which the new plan for the level of industry in the Anglo-American Zone of Germany was published is deplorable. The French had indicated their grave disquiet at the hints of the plan's nature given in Berlin, some weeks ago, by General Clay. They were accordingly invited to take part in Three Power talks in London on " the expert level." They came; they protested vigorously at the absence in the plan of any guarantee either of international control of the Ruhr or of deliveries to France of adequate supplies of Ruhr coal and coke. It was made clear to them that the American and British Governments never had any serious intention of modifying the decision which they had reached; and, on the day after the London talks ended, the Anglo-American plan was promulgated in Berlin. It provides for raising permitted steel output to 10,700,000 tons a year and for a permitted production from German metals, machinery and chemical industries equivalent, on an average, to the output of 1936—a year in which Hitler's rearmament programme was well under way. It is not surprising that these proposals should have caused profound alarm in France, or that the U.S.S.R. should have protested against this unilateral revision of the Potsdam Agreement. So far, of course, this is simply a plan on paper. Its translation into tonnages of realised output will depend on a number of factors which have still to be settled. Will the German workers accept without protest the American idea of handing back German industry to its old owners camouflaged as " managers "? Will Congress in fact appropriate the dollars necessary to provide the Anglo-American Zone with the additional food and capital equipment which the plan requires? To the second question we may perhaps get a partial answer when Mr. Snyder visits London next week. All that is clear at present is that the British Government, with scant respect either for European security or the future of Social-Democracy in Germany, has acquiesced, apparently without protest, in the State Department's conception of German rehabilitation. I so doing, it has accepted the partition of Germa as inevitable : the Big Four Conference schedul for November need hardly be held. Further, failing to support the French demand for inte national control of the Ruhr, it has turned Fren opinion against even the rational increase German industrial productivity which Europe needs require. And will France now co-opera in any of the positive measures contemplated the Marshall plan, if its chief aims are now se to be the pump-priming of Western Germany a Italy as European advanced bases for America?

The Hungarian Elections

Disqualifications and multiple voting irregula ties had probably little effect on the broad resul of the Hungarian elections, in which over million votes (93 per cent of the total electorat were registered; and the new Chamber can b regarded as reflecting fairly accurately the balan of political forces in the country. The amorpho Smallholders' Party, which secured 57 per ce of the votes in 1945 and whose umbrella sheltere crypto-Fascist reactionaries as well as Libera minded Catholics, has been disintegrated. I Left wing, under the Party's old title, has secure 15 per cent of the votes; its Centre (with 16 p cent of the votes) has emerged in Opposition the People's Democratic Party under M. Bara kovics; and its intransigent Right Wing, led b Mr. Pfeiffer, forms the second largest Oppositi Party with 14 per cent of the votes. Since th combined voting strength of the purged Smal holders and the new Parties of the Right is near the same as the Smallholders' total vote two yea ago, it is difficult to detect in the elections a marked swing to the Left. The Coalition of Com munists, Social Democrats, National Peasants an Smallholders—a bloc in which the Communis (with 22 per cent of the votes) are now the large single Party—has won a comfortable majority 60 per cent of the votes cast. If the Coalitio holds together—and this seems likely—it shoul be able to go forward with Hungary's economi plan and with measures to nationalise the bank It is, however, to be noted that either the Soci Democrats or the purged Smallholders will hav the power, if they are so minded, to bring th Government down. The situation will call for th exercise of finesse by Mr. Rakosi.

America and the Facts of Life

During August America began to sample th problems of being a great Power. Her wor headache was Greece. Since the U.S. Mission too over control in Greece they have been searchin for a party composed of anti-Monarchist, Right wing Free-enterprise democrats. They have no decided that this strange animal is not indigeno to Greece, and are attempting to create the so of government they want by direct interference i Greek internal affairs. This has proved a gre shock to American public opinion, which realise for the first time what it means to be legatee o Churchillian policy in Greece. The Sta Department is still reluctant to administer th even greater shock of demanding that Americ boys shall be sent to Greece, and it is bringin considerable pressure to bear on Britain to maintai her troops there. If the British Governme adheres to its promise and completes the with drawal of our troops by October, as the doll crisis compels us to do, America will be i the embarrassing situation of having to decid whether to send forces to the Balkans from th reserves she has been building up in Italy ju as Russia withdraws her army from Bulgar under the newly signed Peace Treaty. Th issue raises in the United States the burnin question of peace-time conscription, for whic the American Legion has now called. Presiden Truman and Presidential candidate Dewey hav both come out in favour of the draft. Senato Taft has remained mum, but made it clear th he will not regard foreign policy as outside th alm of controversy during his political tour of he country this month.

Rome—Washington Axis

By their exchange of Notes, President Truman nd Pope Pius have sought to create a mutual ssistance pact between the Vatican and the White House, reinforcing the current infiltration f U.S. Big Business into Italy. Some weeks go a series of articles in the *Osservatore Romano* uggested that the struggle between Russia and merica was not a case of black versus white; here were some stains on the American side, even igns of "selfish imperialism." President Tru-an's letter sought to ensure that the Roman atholic Church would be firmly on the side of ight (and America) against wrong (and Russia). he lofty moral sentiments with which the resident's letter was filled were designed to rove that America was a Christian nation. (Was quite wise to dwell on the early settlers, so any of whom came to America to escape atholic persecution?) The conclusion was: Our common goal is to arouse and invigorate e faith of men to attain eternal values in our eneration—no matter what obstacles exist or ay arise in the path." The Papal reply was ngthy and abstruse, but the American headline "Pope, Truman pledge mutual aid: Foe nnamed is obviously Russia"—showed that its gnificance was not lost. In the course of his tter the Pope took the occasion to point out that racial injustices" existed even amongst those ho "boast of Christian civilisation"; but this ild reminder of America's Negro problem was mitted from the State Department's summary f the correspondence. This exchange of Notes ill probably serve in the United States to enliven controversy that has begun as the result of a eport from seven Protestant clergymen who ecently visited Yugoslavia and declared that the mprisonment of Archbishop Stepinac was justi-ed. The official adherence of the Catholic hurch to the anti-Communist crusade in America ay not help that crusade in a country notoriously uspicious of Papal intrigue. It can also hardly elp the Catholic Church either in Yugoslavia or oland.

rance and Viet Nam

To negotiate or not to negotiate with Ho Chi inh was one of the chief questions discussed the French Council of Ministers during the ast few weeks. The return of M. Bollaert to aïgon on Friday last suggests that agreement as at last been found on a formula for the re-pening of negotiations with Ho Chi Minh. powerful section of French opinion, extending om Jacquinot to Moutet and including Bidault nd Felix Gouin, was opposed to negotiations. he Socialist Party is divided on the issue; éon Blum, Daniel Mayer and André Philip vour negotiations to end this expensive war s soon as possible. The M.R.P. and the Right ing of the Socialists had hoped to by-pass egotiations with Ho Chi Minh and to find in e ex-Emperor Bao Dai an alternative leader of e Vietnamese. But Bao Dai maintains his yalty to Ho Chi Minh, who undoubtedly has e enthusiastic support of the majority of his eople. At the time of the Paris discussions Ho hi Minh gave a press conference somewhere in orth Viet Nam. He said, in effect, that the French ere deceiving themselves if they believed that ao Dai would play their game. Meanwhile e war goes on; and whilst there have been no rge engagements for some months, guerilla arfare never stops, and the French, reinforced y large numbers of Germans, hold only the rger towns and find it unsafe to leave them. hey have only a limited number of troops; nd, unlike the Dutch in Indonesia, they are not quipped to fight a long war. If M. Bollaert n offer reasonable terms to Ho Chi Minh there ould seem to be no reason why they should il.

TROOPS OR TOURISTS

GIVEN the present position of Britain's balance of foreign payments, the case for a veto on all but essential travel to countries in the "hard currency" area is irresistible. But whether we consider the matter from the economic or psychological point of view, we cannot see any justification for the Government's total sumptuary ban on tourist travel in Europe. It is almost as if it had selected "civilised" leisure and recreation as scapegoats to atone for the absence of really effective economies which would wring more withers. Last winter, when electric power supplies failed, the Third Programme was summarily axed. Now that the shortage is one of dollars, travel abroad is to be indiscriminately suppressed. Regardless of the fact that the facilities for holidays at home are already heavily taxed in this overcrowded island, and that in free and friendly intercourse between peoples lies the best hope of greater international understanding, an Iron Curtain has been rung down between Britain and the rest of Europe.

There are, to be sure, certain exceptions to the ban on foreign travel. Business men who can think up some plausible excuse for a tour on the Continent will still be allowed to spend on it not more than £8 a day; and, unless present methods of control are considerably tightened, they will still be accompanied by camouflaged secretaries. Permits will also be issued in special cases for a limited amount of foreign exchange if it is applied for to participate in conferences of "reputable international bodies," or international sports, or for post-graduate education and research. But, subject to these limited qualifications, British citizens are to be cut off from Europe as effectively as they were when Hitler's divisions stood on the French coast. In compensation, they are offered free licence to travel in the sterling area. This means that Eire—within the somewhat narrow scope of its available tourist facilities—is available as a holiday playground; and it also means that no obstacle will be put in the way of those who have sufficient money and leisure to spend the summer salmon-fishing in Iceland or Newfoundland, or the winter under the sun of Nassau or lion-hunting in Rhodesia. To the common man the sterling area, outside Ireland, is not a practicable holiday resort.

Coming after six years of war which kept the British people prisoners in their island, this new instalment of protracted death by a thousand cuts is depressing: it removes one quite potent incentive to greater effort, and its application is particularly objectionable in the case of students and young people to whose mental horizon foreign travel gives an essential enlargement. Since payment of fares in sterling on British ships and aeroplanes is still permissible, enterprising travel agencies will presumably organise by next summer, if tonnage is available, ship cruises to European ports where tourists may perhaps be permitted to land if they have no spendable money in their pockets. The prospect of Britain thus copying the *Kraft-durch-Freude* sea tours organised by National-Socialist Germany fails signally to kindle our enthusiasm. What is socially and politically valuable is international intercourse between individuals—artists, trade unionists, students, scientists, and just ordinary people; and this, subject to such limited "exchange" visits as can be arranged without recourse to cash transactions, is what the Government's edict has killed.

We can discover no valid economic case for applying this ban, without exception, to the whole non-sterling area. Last year our exports to the whole of Europe exceeded the value of our imports from Europe by £115 millions. To France alone we sold £20 millions' worth more than we bought. The Government's case for its edict is presumably that the journeys of British tourists abroad are an "invisible" import of a luxury or semi-luxury type, and that the consumers belong in the main to the middle class. The argument is only partially valid. Holidays abroad need not cost more than holidays at home; and a short stay in one or other of several Western European countries is well within the means of large numbers of the British working-class. Moreover, what effect does the Government suppose will be exercised by the foreign travel ban on our trade with countries in Europe with whom we already have a favourable balance of payments? In so far as tourists cease putting sterling at these countries' disposal, they will be less able than ever to pay for imports from Britain.

Is this what is really intended? The only alternative explanation at which we can make a guess is that it is hoped to secure from the "deficit" countries of Europe supplies more useful than services for tourists. But is there any reason to suppose that such supplies, in Europe's present circumstances, will necessarily be forthcoming? If not, the result of the ban will simply be a total shrinkage of Anglo-European trade. Surely the correct policy for the British Government would have been to announce an immediate suspension of tourist travel to the "hard currency" area and to proceed to negotiate agreements with "soft currency" countries aiming at regulated quotas of sterling for tourism.

As it is, the public is left with the disagreeable impression that the Government has taken a panicky and ill-considered step. Many people will ask why the axe should fall so heavily on the pleasures and benefits of travel by civilians when the costly journeys and *séjours* abroad of men and women in khaki are still so lavishly financed. Just as the "unessential" motorist may legitimately inquire why he must suffer in order to save £5 million, while £13 millions are spent annually on petrol by the Services, so the would-be traveller abroad may demand to be told why he must contribute £25 millions to the Battle of the Gap when tourists in uniform are costing the country something like £200 millions a year in foreign exchange. By all means let foreign travel be stripped of every element of luxury. Let the basic allowance be reduced to, say, the £20 within the compass of which a modest fortnight abroad can be enjoyed. Surely even the U.S. State Department, in its fervour against "discrimination," is not demanding that Britain should cut herself off physically, as well as politically, from the Continent of whose civilisation she is an integral part?

SHAM REPLY TO MARSHALL

Paris, September 1st, 1947

IT is difficult to tell, by gazing into its eyes, whether a government is speaking the truth. But if the sixteen governments participating in the Paris economic conference have been honest in listing their minimum needs for American aid, then their original estimate of $29.2 billions' worth of U.S. credits for the next four years cannot be cut substantially without making the Marshall plan illusory. The main purpose of General Marshall's offer is to enable these faltering or bankrupt European countries to recover economic stability and financial solvency by 1951. By then, Uncle Sam wants full payment in dollars for his produce, and to hell with philanthropy.

If, however, the $29.2 billion shopping list was based on an *exaggerated* assessment of the sixteen nations' needs, then the findings of the Paris Conference could not be trusted anyhow, and the American Congress—which holds the purse-strings—would disregard the final report soon to be sent from Paris to Washington. The American Government decided more than a fortnight ago that the results of the Paris Conference, already discernible, were highly unsatisfactory and would have to be changed from the ground up.

One delegate in Paris painted this unappetising picture: "Here we have the United States, an elderly, very rich and generous maiden lady. At her feet are sixteen ragged tramps, each asking the wealthy dowager's help to cure his particular ailment. One tramp exhibits the stump of his wooden leg. Another appeals for alms by showing his ugly sores. Before dispensing her largesse, our American benefactress pokes a needle into one hobo's limb to see whether it is real or artificial. Then she inspects the other tramp's running sores to make sure that they are not Hollywood props. To change the metaphor, the gift-horse has been looking its beneficiaries in the mouth." This is just what has been happening in Paris. And the United States' diagnosis is that the provisional $29.2 billion bid for American credits under the Marshall plan could not survive scrutiny.

To translate the parable into the language of actuality, the largest single item in the sixteen nations' list of requirements is wheat. France is one of the principal claimants for American multi-billion dollar aid, and wheat is her greatest need. Yet Will Clayton, the top-ranking American official in Europe, privately reminded the Paris Conference that, while the French Government is making an immense claim for wheat imports, to be financed and supplied by the United States, the wheat-growing area in France is to-day 30 per cent smaller than in 1939. French peasants are using some of this former wheatland for pasture, where butter is being produced profitably for the black market. Let the French first restore their wheat production, says the U.S., before wringing their hands on General Marshall's doorstep.

The French reply that they are unable—without resorting to " Communistic " coercion—to dictate to the individualistic French peasant what he should do with his farm. Moreover, the French add, before more land can be sown to wheat, the U.S. must supply tractors under the Marshall plan. This illustrates the sort of problem which has been bedevilling the Paris Conference. It has had its counterpart in an American challenge to the soundness of the British and Italian shopping lists. Coal being the pivot of Britain's crisis, the American Government's ardour for helping the British is chilled as long as the miners have to be coaxed to work longer hours.

Informed of these and other American objections, Sir Oliver Franks, the gifted acting chairman of the Paris Conference, flew to Geneva and on August 23rd heard Mr. Clayton lodge these criticisms. Sir Oliver returned to Paris, jolted by Mr. Clayton's warning that the American Congress would never swallow the Paris Conference's recommendations, as they then stood. So the experts in Paris sharpened their axe and began chopping off immense chunks of the " minimum " requirements of the sixteen nations. As this despatch is written, the original estimate of $29.2 billion has already been slashed to $21.4 billion, and is likely to be cut below the $20 billion level before the European reply reaches Marshall.

The master axe-man is Sir David Waley of the British Treasury, chairman of the Paris Conference committee on balance of payments. How has Waley's team set about slashing—already by $6.8 billion—the " minimum " request of the sixteen European countries for American help?

In the original sixteen-nation shopping list, food accounted for 85 per cent of the total $29.2 billion estimate. But the first $25 billion assessment of food needs for four years was soon lowered to $19 billion, including agricultural supplies. This figure has now further been reduced mercilessly and by very dubious methods. Here, in summary form, is how the Paris Conference has already axed its request by $6.8 billion:

(1) The sixteen nations' four-year requirements for food have been lowered by $2.8 billion.

(2) Reassessing trade prospects until 1951, the conference overnight concluded that the sixteen countries can increase by $2 billion their exports to nations outside the conference.

(3) In obedience to the United States' demand, all requests for machinery and other capital goods have been removed from the Marshall Plan, thus " saving " another $1.5 billion. Instead, this sum will be asked of the Bretton Woods bank, which is expected to finance the sixteen nations' imports of iron and steel plant, electrical and mining equipment, merchant ships, oil refining installations and other capital equipment.

(4) A further $300 million have been lopped off by deciding that Marshall's sixteen orphans shall obtain from other sources some imports which they had intended to get from the U.S.

(5) Finally, the estimate of requirements for agricultural supplies for the next four years has been reduced by $200 million.

Sir David Waley's hatchet boys have also done another important job of trimming Santa Claus Marshall's Christmas tree to please his Congressional children. The Paris Conference has discovered, to its chagrin, that even if the former estimate of $29.2 billion credits were fully met by the U.S., this would still leave the sixteen countries labouring under a $5.8 billion deficit in their balance of payments in 1951, the final year of the Marshall Plan. This news afflicted Mr. Clayton with gooseberry pimples. So, to appease Congress, the Paris Conference has revised this estimate to $3.2 billion, and it is now to be sliced down some more. This goes part way towards meeting Washington's dictum that Congress is unlikely to appropriate the vast sums needed, unless it be persuaded that by 1951 the participating nations will approximately have attained equilibrium in their balance of payments.

By what magic has the conference, with pencil and paper, achieved this glorious improvement in European conditions over the coming four years? Having been told by Mr. Clayton that the baby must be dressed in Sunday bib and tucker for Congress's benefit, the experts in Paris concluded that they had viewed much too darkly the probable movement of world prices until 1951. So they suddenly thought again and decided that, if all other commodity prices were to remain unchanged, the wheat price—crucial item in the whole plan—would fall from its present level of $2.60 per bushel in Chicago to $1.75 by the end of 1951. This prophecy, if borne out by events, would lessen the sixteen nations' deficit at the end of 1951 by $2.6 billion. A sceptic might be tempted to ask why a grumble from Will Clayton's throat within four days altered the whole prospective trend on the world wheat market. Another grunt from Will, and presumably the bottom would drop out of the market! Or is it just possible that the truth is a little too uncouth for America's delicate Congressmen and that it calls for a big splash of window-dressing?

This sort of flim-flam incurs the danger of discrediting some of the genuinely valuable work accomplished in Paris and may reflect upon the veracity of the final report which the conference intends to present to the American Government during the next fortnight. Last Saturday Mr. Clayton again met Sir Oliver Franks and put a series of stiff conditions. This meeting occurred at the American Embassy in Paris, and those present included five top-flight State Department officials and the five-man executive committee of the Paris Conference. Mr. Clayton's main demand was for a further sharp reduction in the conference's forecast of a $3.2 billion deficit in the sixteen countries' balance-of-payment in 1951. So the statisticians and astrologers in Paris are again to cast a horoscope more to the liking of Mr. Clayton.

If the findings of the Paris Conference are thus being doctored to suit Congress, the responsibility for this treatment (not to say, for this fraud) rests mainly with Washington. For since the money must come from America, an amiable whisper from Mr. Clayton to Sir Oliver Franks carries the force of a barked command. Mr. Clayton declares in effect: " Your preliminary results are bad, extremely bad. First, you must gear up your estimates of industrial and agricultural production among the sixteen countries. Next, you must whittle down your total request for American aid, especially for food. Thirdly, you must offer a cheerful picture of Western Europe's economy four years from now." This American attitude ignores the axiom that the entire Western European production programme depends largely on the quantity of food America is ready to make available to the sixteen countries. Slash the food imports and you endanger the productive capacity of the European miner and other heavy workers. Cut American credits for feedstuffs, fertilisers and farm implements, and the sixteen nations must lower their agricultural production sights.

By the excessive axing of its request for U.S. credits, the Paris Conference is certainly making its reply to Marshall more palatable to the Truman administration and to Congress. But will such an artificial reduction of the request for American aid rob the Marshall plan of reality? Will it plug, say, only half the leak? And are we then to have a repetition of our experience with the American loan to Britain? Will the multi-billion dollar Marshall programme, after four years, still see Western Europe sliding down the toboggan, grappling with a deficit economy? Will there be another American outcry: " There goes more of our good money down the European sewer? "

This raises the question whether it would be wiser for Sir Oliver Franks to pay a little less heed to Will Clayton and to present as honest a conference report as possible to Washington. In the last resort, anyway, the Truman administration and Congress will decide what American supplies are available to meet the sixteen nations' needs. After thorough study, the Paris Conference reached this significant conclusion. Even were the U.S. to provide in full the $29.2 billion originally contemplated in Paris, the average calory level for the sixteen participating countries would still be lower than pre-war. If the American credits under the Marshall plan are bound to be inadequate, it would be sounder to let the United States bear the entire responsibility for this decision.

FREDERICK KUH

A LONDON DIARY

A COUNTRYWOMAN spoke to me the other day with as much excitement about the pleasure of taking an egg from under your own hen as a countryman showed in the prospect of being able once again to breed pigs. Everyone knows that the tomatoes you pick out of your own garden taste twice as good as those you buy in a shop, and that goes for vegetables and fruit of every sort. The prospect of becoming a more nearly self-sufficient agricultural country is not merely some compensation for other present troubles, but carries with it just that natural and popular appeal in which other Government measures have been so obviously lacking. I think Tom Williams forgot this the other day in presenting his very promising scheme for the land. He talked as if we were to dig for dollars as we used to dig for victory. We don't dig for dollars, but for potatoes and beetroot and broccoli, and you can scarcely find a man in town or country who doesn't get some enjoyment out of the prospect. We must start the allotments in the parks again. At a word, pig clubs will spring up in every village and the country will be loud with happily cackling hens. Their owners will cackle just as loudly with pride and pleasure. How far England can be self-sufficient in food is a question for experts, but not only for experts. In Whitehall eggs are statistics; in the country they come from your own speckled hen. If the Government say that we are to go as far as we can towards growing our own food (without making the absurd sacrifices necessary for producing all our own cereals), it will gain a popularity that will surprise even itself. In any case, we must now lose some of the artificial industrial prosperity of the nineteenth century which mainly benefited a section of the population. Let's start out with the quite sensible idea that the British Isles are to produce all the milk and butter and cheese and meat (that is where Ireland specially comes in) and all the fruit and vegetables they can. Turn the scientists loose on this problem and don't forget the potentialities of grassland. This, of course, is the best way of making Britain more independent of dollars; but don't talk about the dollars—talk about the good earth and the food we can get out of it. Work and don't want.

* * *

There is no particular secret about Sir Alan Cunningham's sudden visit to London. I understand that when it was first suggested by Foreign Office officials that the three shiploads of Jews should be put ashore in Germany, Sir Alan, as High Commissioner in Palestine, protested. He said in effect that his job in Palestine, with British officials in ghettos, was almost intolerable, but that if we started sending Jewish immigrants to Germany, it would be quite impossible. We already have one soldier in Palestine to every two adult Jews. Even Mr. Bevin can scarcely want more troops there. Yet he preferred the bright idea of showing the Jews where the incinerators were to the warnings of Sir Alan, and Sir Alan has come over here to make his protest in person. Even now the British public does not understand what is being done in its name. It is merely told by *The Times* that the camps near Lubeck prepared for the Jews are "reasonably clean." In this matter the British public is quite unaware what the rest of the world is thinking. Outside this island, sending Jews to Germany is regarded as sadism.

* * *

There are rumours that the personnel of the Control Commission for Germany is to be reduced from its twenty-odd thousands to about half that number. A correspondent who has been studying the subject tells me that I was right some months ago in urging that the proper figure would be four or five thousand. Apart from the increased efficiency which would be involved in reducing this most fantastic of bureaucracies, the economic saving would be very great. A British official wrote to me this week from Germany: "I hate to think of the new petrol restrictions at home when 80 per cent. of the juice here goes on swanning or fetching food from the country."

* * *

A correspondent attending the meeting of the British Association at Dundee writes:

> This year's meeting at Dundee has revealed a division which may amount to schism between those who want scientific freedom without responsibility and those who insist that responsibility is the price of scientific freedom. It has been brought to a head by Professor Bernal's demand that the wartime scientists should be recalled to deal with the crisis by methods which were proven during the war. Sir Henry Dale, President of the B.A., opposed this in his Presidential address; he wanted scientists to get back to their labs and inveighed against the "conscription of science" and "totalitarian planning." He was answered by a formidable combination which included Sir Robert Watson-Watt, of radar fame, Prof. Zuckerman, who as Tedder's scientific adviser was largely responsible for changing bombing strategy from "area bombing" to the precision targets which were decisive in the final stages of the war, and Bernal, who was the scientist behind Mountbatten in Combined Ops. At a public meeting on "Operational Research," Watson-Watt challenged "the Walled City of Ivory Towers" which shut out the cries of the world, and the advocates of planning detailed ways in which they could effectively help in the crisis. One B.A. member said to me: "The issue is whether the wartime scientific V.I.P.s are to become the peacetime academic 'spivs.'"

* * *

Because she had been so unlike her old self in her years of illness, the tragic death of Vera Meynell passed with very little notice. Yet she had been a very valuable, very beautiful, very clever and hard-to-deceive part of what in the 'twenties and 'thirties didn't mind being called the Left intelligentsia. There must be many still who remember that figure very well. There is very little left of her in writing. A very good translation of Ernst Toller's forgotten play *Masses and Man;* her name on some of the announcements of the Nonesuch Press, and on the *Week-end Book;* I think that is all, or nearly all. It is always so with people whose medium is the spoken and not the written word; they vanish so quickly. It is very difficult to "fix" someone like Vera Meynell, whose most remarkable quality, apart from her beauty, was the ability, in talk, to hold an idea or an action up to you, to analyse it and pull it to pieces, to extract from it (and maybe from you) incompetent thought, unreasonableness, sentimentality and hidden cruelty. Conversation with her was not always easy, but it was hardly ever dull, and it was sometimes highly educational. A flame? Too common a metaphor; she would not have passed it. But she was brilliant, she moved swiftly, and she could burn you. What many people did not realise was that she was also very kind. Her love, not easily given, was very strong; but I do not only mean that. She really hated, and would work quite hard to stop, any form of cruelty—except, perhaps, intellectual cruelty, of which she was a skilled practitioner herself. One of the things that troubled her in her last years was a perpetual, almost an inflamed, consciousness of the vast amount of unprevented cruelty there is in the world to-day.

* * *

If you are content with an inexpensive holiday, reading or dozing in a deck chair with the sun on your face, flowers round you and sparkling water only a hundred yards away, you need go no farther than the village of Charing Cross. All these amenities, including a band twice a day, are to be found in the Embankment Gardens. Every modern convenience is supplied; there are plenty of unrationed meals at all prices in the vicinity, and you will find more historic monuments within reach than in any other holiday resort I know. To your right is Westminster; to your left St. Paul's. If you are interested in pictures, you have the choice between the Tivoli and the National Gallery. You can even join the Players if you want a performance in which you can play a part. You can watch the barges and the tugs pass slowly by, and, as the trains rumble over Charing Cross Bridge, have the vicarious pleasure of imaginative travel in a hot and crowded train while you yourself remain coolly at ease. If you are tired of the band, you can wander down the gardens and enjoy the colossal statue of Robert Burns, the weeping woman who laments the death of W. S. Gilbert, the solid figures of Robert Raikes, who founded Sunday Schools, the bearded Sir Wilfrid Lawson, temperance reformer, General Gordon on his camel and the beautiful little water garden that was laid out for some very important Field Marshal whose name I never can call to mind.

* * *

When night falls and the band packs up, the crowd goes home. But not everyone. Down-and-outs stretch themselves on the benches. The police, who have important duties to perform at Fascist and anti-Fascist meetings, are a tolerant and kindly race; they do not disturb the sleepers or the lovers kissing in the shadows. Nor, I judge from the glowing cigarettes I can see from my windows, do they mind occasional convivial groups who sit on and talk far into the night. All this is tranquil and agreeable and as it should be. There is one further facility, not provided as far as I know in any other holiday resort. The other night I was awakened about midnight by the sound of someone playing Beethoven, by no means badly. It was too late for the wireless, and I was puzzled. An hour or two later I woke again, and the music was played intermittently all night. At six o'clock, peering through the trees, I saw the solution to the mystery. A young man who seemed not much in need of practice, was sitting in the deserted bandstand, quietly playing at the grand piano to a world in which, as far as I know, only I was attentive.

CRITIC

GREEN GROW THE RASHERS O!

"It is nonsense to suggest that Britons will be driven to eating grass."—Mr. Strachey, August 31st.

This nation will never eat grass—
  So runs the official denial,
But if Britain remains in this pass
  We must soon give new pastures a trial.
Then the Ministry chef at H.Q. M.O.F.
  Will dish up the crops we are rich in,
And housewives will learn what to do with lucerne
  And chop up the lawn in the kitchen.

When greenstuff fades out of the shops
  Our meadows will come to the rescue,
We will munch the rotation of crops
  As Dog's-Bent gives place to Sheep's Fescue;
The housewife will fetch her ration of vetch
  And bale of fresh forage in season
And tempt appetite with a Trefoil Delight
  With top-dressings of ripe mousetrap cheese on.

Away with conservative views!
  Our trough meadow grass can be eaten!
There is more in the Current Food News
  Than ever was in Mrs. Beeton.
Why pay for a course of Argentine horse,
  Neglecting indigenous *gramina?*
Cocksfoot green or dry can beat Woolton Pie
  In keeping up national stamina.

There is plenty of national feed
  Once we get down to national grazing,
Our commons provide what we need
  And our health will be simply amazing!
When families browse with the sheep and the cows
  The housewife at last will have leisure,
For three meals a day off Stapledon hay
  Can be cropped *à la* Nebuchadnezzar.

There are acres of pasture around,
  There are parks and golf courses for nibbling,
Our food in our fields will be found
  When canned imports no longer are dribbling.
A dinner of turves tones up muscles and nerves,
  And in winter when grasses turn yellow
We can always fall back on a cut from the stack,
  For good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow!

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Neysa Grahame.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The plays are well constructed, but not, perhaps, so very simple; and in the first one, the juxtaposition of a flock of "Brownies of Bethlehem" with the Nativity inevitably strikes a curious note, however necessary it may have been to add novelty.—*Drama.*

When Henry Louis Faulkner (42), described as independent, of Royston Water, Churchinford, was charged at Taunton, on Wednesday, with being drunk and incapable on the highway he said: "I intended to be picked up by the police with a view to finding out just what one's treatment would be. It was a pleasure to find how nicely and smoothly everything went."—*Pulman's Weekly News.*

Still in the Naval Detachment of the Palestine Police, John Dart has been doing ordinary police duty in Haifa. Serious crimes, including murder, seem to be quite frequent and Dart is gaining valuable experience.—*Shebbearian,* school magazine of Shebbear College.

Proprietor of Country Hotel, wishing to keep on staff, offers reduced terms to a few permanent visitors . . . especially suitable for those unable to adapt themselves to this post-war age.—*The Times.*

THE MOTE AND THE BEAM

The American State Department expresses a very proper anxiety that elections in European countries should be free and unstained by corruption; that all trials should be fair and open; that opinions should be freely and fully expressed; that the right to religious freedom should be observed; all these constitute an impressive desire that the citizens of Europe shall in no way be deprived of what is essential to the enjoyment of liberty.

But I venture to believe that the State Department would be able to exercise a more effective influence if the exhortations that it makes with as much vigour were taken a little more closely to heart by both the Federal and State governments of the United States. For as the autumn of 1947 begins, America is in the grip of an hysterical witch-hunt that is as ugly in its character as it is fantastic in its proportions. Some of it derives from actual legislation, or from legislative enquiries; some of it is the outcome of executive order; a part is the expression of a general atmosphere in which rabble-rousers, professional and amateur alike, seek to drive into silence or inaction, either by threats or penalties, men and women of liberal mind and temper, and to create the impression, among ordinary American citizens, that unless this witch-hunt succeeds, the "Communist" conspiracy in the United States will deliver this weak and innocent nation into the hands of its enemies. One is tempted to suggest that if a country in which conservative traditions are so deeply entrenched can be swept by hysteria of this size, rational Americans ought to understand why countries that have hardly emerged from war and revolution should not yet have been able to settle down to a condition where men with esoteric opinions—who, after all, were, only yesterday, the rulers of those countries—are looked upon less with amusement than with suspicion. Crusaders for international freedom ought to come into court with clean hands.

The President of the United States has obtained a grant of eleven million dollars from Congress to purge the Civil Service of undesirable elements. Hundreds of officials have already been dismissed, many of them without any hearing, some of them after hearings that have bordered on the farcical; and it is significant that the dismissals have been mostly in the State and War Departments. People have been dismissed because they were subscribers to the *New Republic;* or ardent supporters of the Spanish Republic, or had joined some organisation after 1941 to promote friendship with the U.S.S.R. Mr. Henry Wallace personally, and publicly in the *New Republic*, vouches for two cases, in the first of which an official, upon whom no other suspicion rested, was dismissed because he had expressed no anti-Russian views, and, in the second, the accusations, being confidential, could not be communicated to the accused man, who, nevertheless, was dismissed because he could not, within five days, answer charges of which he was obviously unaware.

That is bad enough. But the record of the Committee on "un-American activities" of the House of Representatives, over which Mr. Parnell Thomas presides, is worse. This Committee, the successor of the notorious Dies Committee, has been sitting, in its various forms, for over a decade; it is supposed to enable Congress to pass legislation dealing with subversive influences in the United States, though, so far, it has resulted in no statute. Since most of its members are aware that, in peacetime, any legislation it recommended would be unconstitutional under the First Amendment to the constitution, it has devoted most of its energies to what Americans call "smear tactics"—the endeavour, that is, to blacken reputations by unproven innuendoes, whispered suspicions, wild denunciations and the like. As it operates, almost anything can be "un-American," from enthusiasm for civil liberty in general, to a belief that nothing in the Constitution forbids a belief in Communism, in particular. Witnesses are bullied and insulted, their books and private records are searched, they have been threatened with imprisonment for contempt, and, where lawyers have appeared in their defence, the chairman of the Committee has suggested the desirability of their indictment. No one who has not read the incredible minutes of evidence of this Committee can even begin to imagine the depths to which its members have sunk.

The states are not behindhand in the great battle. Eight Southern states have outlawed the "closed" shop. Widespread action is under way in a number of areas to make sure that Negroes are effectively prevented from voting; the Democratic Party in Arkansas is seeking to prevent any registration as a voter in the primaries unless the citizen swears to his disapproval of the Fair Employment Practices Act or the proposed legislation to enact Federal anti-lynching laws, or to repeal the poll-tax—the very measures, that is to say, that are intended to secure protection for the Negro in his political and economic life. Michigan has passed three vicious statutes against political and industrial liberty, and its major academic institutions are now being investigated by a special committee of the Michigan legislature to dig out the nests of Communism in them. Under the pretext of safeguarding the State against "foreign agents"—that is, any person or group of persons which aids, directly or indirectly, "the purposes, aims, or objects of a foreign power—" the Executive has now authority to examine all organisations, to enquire into their membership and records, and to compel all their propaganda to carry the announcement that the Act against Foreign Agents has been complied with. The implementation of the Act is in the hands of the Attorney-General, and offenders may be punished with imprisonment for five years or fines up to five thousand dollars or both. In Californian schools, another Committee on the Dies model is combing the textbooks to get rid of any subversive material, like a table on the distribution of income in the U.S., or an explanation of sex-hygiene.

Inevitably, in a period of witch-hunting, the Negroes come off as the worst victims. There has been a recurrence of lynching, and, so far as my own knowledge goes, all the accused have been acquitted, even when their guilt was a matter of common knowledge. A G.I. Negro, who wanted to get off a bus at a stopping place to relieve himself—he was still in uniform—was beaten by a policeman, to whom the conductor reported him for obstructive conduct—until he was rendered permanently blind; but the policeman was triumphantly acquitted. The clauses in leases in Detroit which prohibit the renting of houses to Negroes in over 90 per cent. of its area. even though the population of Negroes has increased by 50 per cent. in the war years, has been held constitutional by the State Supreme Court. The Southern Conference on Human Welfare, a body of high standing of which the object is to mitigate the horror of the South's "peculiar problem," is, with remarkable tenacity, being attacked as a Communist affiliate. In Mississippi, a journalist who signed a petition asking the American Senate to investigate the election of the late Senator Bilbo, one of the worst anti-Negro baiters of his time, has been the subject of careful enquiry by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to make sure that his signature was not due to Communist beliefs.

This is merely a random example of the current American hysteria; it could be almost indefinitely extended. It does not deal with Jew-baiting, the Taft-Hartley Act, the reappearance of the injunction in labour disputes, the activities of the special purveyors of hate, among whom Roman Catholic and even Wesleyan priests are notable; nor does it deal with the continuous and pervasive pressure of the American legion, the Chambers of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers against even mild tendencies to liberalism such as good will to Trade Unions interest in the Spanish Republic, or expression of sympathy with the idea of a planned economy. It omits any discussion of the wider implications of the opposition to Mr. Lilienthal's nomination as Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, or of the Bill, happily vetoed by President Truman even though sponsored by at least two outstanding university presidents, which would have made the endowment of scientific research pretty completely controlled by the Defence Departments.

Of course, there are other sides to the picture—the activity of the National Council of Civil Liberties, the tireless zeal of Mrs. Roosevelt in urging — quite intelligibly — an International Declaration of Civil Rights, the strength with which the Supreme Court, above all Justices Frankfurter and Jackson, support the Holmes-Brandies tradition in civil liberties. There are innumerable Americans who view this witch-hunting with the same contempt as most British citizens would do. But there are far too many who are completely apathetic about it, and even more, above all the vested interests in business and ecclesiastical life, who regard it with unmitigated and unconcealed satisfaction. When Mr. Churchill can spare the time from speculating on the invasion of British liberties by "totalitarian" socialists, he might well give some little consideration to the invasion of American liberties by the passionate defenders of "competitive selection."

There is folly, and to spare, in many European countries, as well as in the Middle East, over the problem of civil liberty; in Palestine, beyond doubt, the case against Great Britain is a grave one. But an America which sets out to correct the errors of other peoples, will do well to remember what was meant by those who issued the Declaration of Independence. It was not without foresight that they wrote that since "life, liberty, and happiness" are "inalienable rights," it follows that "whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organising its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness." We all need American help. But it would be easier to organise a fitting response to "unsordid acts" if they came from an American Government interested, at home not less than abroad, in the principles of 1776.

Harold J. Laski

BACKGROUND TO EDGEHILL

Down by the docks the cellars which once housed slaves in transit are due for demolition. Near them, before the war, 20,000 men stood daily in the dockers' stands, waiting for the touch of the foreman's hand on their backs which would assign them to a job for the day. You got one if you were bigger and stronger than the average or if you knew the foreman well enough to buy him a pint. For most the rule was "three on the hook, three on the book." "Three on the hook" meant three days of unloading cotton or hides. "Three on the book" meant three aimless, empty days of unemployment relief. Now the system is different. A guaranteed week for the 12,000 dockers on the dock register brings in £4 7s 6d—work or no work. Anything from £6 to £20 a week can be earned on the job, and there are no stands of hungry men for the foreman to look over. Instead there are control centres along the dock road to report to twice a day, and the money is safe, even if there is no cargo of beef waiting to be unloaded before it goes rotten.

Liverpool is by tradition without industries, city of casual and occasional occupation, rich for the merchants and businessmen, poor for the workers. In 1920 over 100,000 were unemployed in Liverpool. Up to 1939 there were never le than fifty to seventy thousand on the dole. To-day the figure is 24,000, still the largest of any town in England. But Liverpool is shaking herself out of her uncertainties. The decasualisation of dock labour is one sign of the change. The new trading estates owned by the Corporation at Speke, at Fazackerly and at Kirkby are an indication of Liverpool's determination to have industries of her own.

The 850,000 who live in Liverpool have long been a testimony to uncontrolled private enterprise. A high unemployment figure made for a constant and steady supply of cheap labour whenever the middlemen wanted to shift their goods in and out of the great warehouses, which cover more acreage than anywhere else in the world. Distribution was not confined to the docks. In 1938, 44,000 were employed in the shops and the retail trades of Liverpool. Even to-day there are 30,000—more than are engaged in any other single occupation. Liverpool served as a port for England and as a shopping centre for North Wales and the surrounding countryside. That was her ailment. She had no roots and every economic ill-wind blew her awry. Two years has been a short time to effect a complete cure, but the remedy is being applied.

For the present army of unemployed there is no immediate short-term solution. If the materials were available, the Corporation might be able to produce the palliative of public works to absorb 3,000 during the winter. Nothing more can be done until the factories out at Kirkby and Fazackerly have been built. For some this makes a case for the Government to declare the Merseyside a Development Area. Then 100 per cent loans for building and machinery could be granted in place of the 80 per cent loan for building only which Liverpool can make.

The arguments against it are the strong links between the Tory-controlled Corporation and business interests which, whether Socialists like it or not, bring like-minded employers of labour to the Merseyside to take advantage of the nearness of the port for the fulfilment of their export orders. It is not capital that is required but raw materials, and there is some doubt as to whether Government control of this type of private enterprise would do the job as quickly or as well.

In the meanwhile there are the football pools, employing 15,000, nearly all women. Many of them are machinists and would be more useful in factories. But working for Littlewoods or Vernons is a light, clean job and brings 70s. a week to a nineteen-year-old girl, plus a recruiting fee for any other girl she attracts into the industry. An obvious step would be to close the football pools down. But it would be an unwise one. The first result would be to send the unemployment figures up to 40,000. Later the girls would be absorbed by industry, but only at the expense of sacking the older women, unless there was a wholesale direction of women to work in other towns—action which Mr. Isaacs says he does not intend to take.

Four thousand of the unemployed are women; 3,000 are disabled; 7,000 are semi-skilled or fit only for light employment. The hard core are the 8,000 able-bodied men, mostly ex-Service, with no rights under the reinstatement order because their trade pre-war was the same as the rest of Liverpool—casual labour. Some of them might have got jobs for eight months in the year, working for the extinct Cotton Exchange, whose impressive building now stands empty in the centre of Liverpool and whose abolition provoked anger among the merchants but none among the workers.

Naturally, with so many unemployed, and in so tough a city as Liverpool, there is an element of disillusionment and frustration. On occasion, as in the Orangemen and Catholic riots, this can be fanned into violence. The publication of the photograph of the two hanged sergeants in the *Daily Express* was the excuse for the last outburst. In Birkenhead the men in the abattoirs, a number of them ex-Commandos and paratroopers. refused to cut the kosher meat. In Liverpool the abattoir men followed suit. On the fringes of Edgehill hooligans smashed Jewish windows, and looted the shops owned by Jews, for several nights. Among the fifty arrested were several who had taken part in every riot of every description in Liverpool for the last twenty years. Nevertheless, there is an undercurrent of anti-Semitism which can only be killed by full employment. As yet it is not serious, and it will not play any major part in the Edgehill by-election.

There, the issues are economic: food, housing and employment. On employment, the Labour Party can point to the pre-war figures and compare them with the present. The Tories can only compare them with the rest of the country, and complain that they make the "Work or Want" campaign foolish. "Give me your trust. It will never be abused," wrote Mr. Bevins in 1935. Then he was the Labour candidate in a Liverpool municipal election. "I am determined to do all in my power to preserve the standards of character which distinguish our country and its people," he wrote in 1947. Now he is the Conservative candidate in the Edgehill by-election, and he has little else to say. Not that it matters, because this election will be settled by the vague feelings of the electorate in relation to the rest of Liverpool and the country, not by the personalities of the candidates.

The Tories here have no more of an alternative policy to offer than they have elsewhere. Their aim is to canalise and express the grievances of the people. The grumbles of the queues are transfererd to the political platform. Food is the outstanding one, particularly the fat ration. Nobody knows how the food supply could be improved. Everyone knows that there is a shortage of dollars to buy it. Yet they feel that there is not enough. The Tories agree with them and invoke the name of Lord Woolton without saying how they would get more. Fortunately for the Labour Party, the details of the £144 million cuts have not yet been announced, so that there has been no sharp recent impact on the electorate, only undefined misgivings.

On housing, the Socialists have a slight advantage. Every Liverpudlian can see for himself how many thousands of houses were destroyed during the blitz. As he sees the new ones going up he remembers the Tory record of slums in the days of Liverpool's prosperity.

On September 11 Edgehill will treat the election as a straight fight between the Opposition and the Government, however many other candidates there may be in the field. The I.L.P. candidate will take a few hundred of the Labour vote. The Liberals will take a few hundred off each side. But the result is a foregone conclusion: a Labour victory with a reduced majority—reduced by apathy and a measure of discontent, but not by anything which has been offered by the Tories.

WOODROW WYATT

PRE-FAB FACTORY

THE green buses—"Workers Only"—start rolling up to the factory gates about twenty minutes before clocking-on time, offending the cold grey emptiness of the country morning with their smoke-filled, lighted interiors. During the war it was an aircraft factory, turning out Lancasters, and spreading out beyond the works football ground is the wide deserted airfield. The control tower still stands, a white concrete geometrical ghost of recent history. The flat green fields stretch out in every direction, the nearest town being four miles away, and one can be watching the day breaking over the Welsh hills at 5.59 a.m. and be clocking one's card at 6.0 a.m. inside the factory in surroundings very much like the interior of a factory in Islington or the heart of Birmingham. The blue lighting, the whining of electric saws, the staccato clattering of drills and the general Capěkian atmosphere make the rustic greenness a few yards away as remote as the vales of Arcady.

The whole process of making pre-fabricated houses goes on here. The raw material comes in—aluminium, wood, glass and various complementary knick-knacks; completed houses go out. At least the completed parts go out. Entire houses are too large to be conveyed on one lorry; they are dispatched in four parts, which are assembled on the housing sites.

Only a handful of highly placed executives, however, think and work in this overall dimension. Fleet manoeuvres do not mean the same thing to a particular stoker in a particular ship as they mean to an admiral; and the making of pre-fab houses is more real, more interesting, more closely bound up with human endeavour to these high executives than it is to the clerk who files paper orders and makes lists of absentees, to the labourer whose push sends the various units ten yards farther along the rollers, to the fellow directing the paint spray gun on to wall after wall, or to the girl who wheels the cake trolley around during refreshment breaks.

There is a board for all to see, stating the target for previous week, present week and coming week, the actual number produced the previous week, and the accumulative total achieved since production of pre-fabs started. Few workers take any interest in this board. The average worker thinks in terms of his or her bonus card, not of the factory production board. The bonus card states how long a worker spends on a particular job. A time rate is given for that job, and the margin by which a worker beats this rate determines his bonus, i.e., that varying portion of his pay, depending on the individual effort, which is added on to the flat weekly wage. One can only generalise, of course, upon how rigidly individual effort is fettered to bonus pay. Some workers do not understand how their bonus is made up, and accept what they get passively, leaving the computations thereof in the laps of the rate-fixer and timekeeper. But human nature being what it is, bonus pay is a much stronger incentive to extra effort than constant reminders to the workers that the country needs houses and more houses.

This baseness of motive can hardly be criticised when one sees the terrible monotony of factory work. Journalists, doctors, architects and such people, who have been free to choose careers in which they are interested and who take pride in their respective professions, perhaps apply themselves more disinterestedly to their work; but the number of people who feel a spiritual urge to saw, drill, crop, pierce, deburr or assemble must be considerably smaller than the number who feel an urge to write or to heal. In fact, one might say that there is only one conceivable reason why any normal person would wish to stand on one spot for eight hours a day putting strips of metal into the guillotine, pressing the lever, and taking them out again, or holding the drill gun against a certain spot for two or three seconds until the hole is made, and then doing the same against another spot—and that is to earn money.

Not much can be expected from appeals to the workers' sense of political responsibility. There have been several articles in the press recently stressing the need for impressing upon the workers that an election in itself cannot produce material wealth and that upon their efforts alone depends the success or failure of the new Government. Very few workers can be stupid enough to think that a change of party in Westminster can of itself produce a flow of goods, enabling workers to retire to a life of blissful ease. The fault, in fact, seems to be the other way—too many workers are like Orwell's donkey Benjamin, holding a whichever-party's-in-they're-all-the-bloody-same attitude. But the majority of those who are not soaked in this attitude, of those who do think that the Labour Party in power is more beneficial to the interests of the working people than a Conservative majority could ever be, simply do not feel about politics deeply enough to respond in any notable degree to appeals to their political emotions. The average worker is more deeply moved over a Cup Final than over half a dozen Acts of Parliament. It is doubtful whether one in a hundred of the thousands of workers in this factory has ever read a Government White Paper.

A much higher degree of political consciousness than that at present existing would thus be needed for workers to remain aware, through hour after hour, through shift after shift, of dull repetitive work, that upon their continued efforts depends the well-being of a working man's political party. Those whose minds do think in terms of political epochs would probably be incapable of standing such monotonous work for a prolonged period anyway. It is a fairly safe generalisation that the kind of fellow who tends to read Koestler and Laski in his leisure time is not so hot at notching a sheet of aluminium a thousand times a day. The minds of those who do stand at factory benches for eight hours at a stretch, for years on end, making mechanical movements with their hands, tend to dwell on the possibility of cigarettes in the canteen at break-time and whatever is on at the local Odeon rather than on the future of the Labour Party. Far from it being "no go the picture palace, no go the stadium," such things are, in fact, constant stimuli, particularly in the case of the younger workers, for tiding one over the ever-recurrent dead stretch of working hours. Speculations as to the future activities of Stan Matthews and Bruce Woodcock are much more attractive to the mind of the average factory worker than speculations as to the future activities of Marshal Tito and Ho Chi Minh. World affairs are as remote to lots of workers as the depressing sensation of coming downstairs at 6.30 every morning to a fire-grate of dead ash is to a high-ranking diplomat.

Thus, the bulk of productive work being done by those who are least susceptible to ideological appeals, there should be a more acute realisation of the fact that individual effort in the factory is more or less bound up with mercenary considerations. The flower of selfless endeavour simply does not blossom from such barren soil. This realisation foreshadows an ultimate State in which those doing the interesting jobs, which usually require and attract the richer minds, will get the poorest pay. Even so, there will always be men who will want to devote themselves to some task requiring human individuality, irrespective of financial reward. And, it is to be hoped, since man has evolutionised so far beyond the self-sufficient "lone-hunter" phase, there will always be those prepared to prostitute themselves daily to the insatiable monster Drudgery—if the financial bait is attractive enough. It's the only attraction there is.

HENRY WILLIAMS

FIESTA IN AULD REEKIE

ONE can liken events in Scotland to a cauldron of boiling broth. Something is always swirling to the top, attracting attention for a moment, and vanishing again into the bubbling depths. But the savoury reek is individual, and the recipe is entirely national.

Currently on top, in this *pot-au-feu*, there is the endeavour of the fishermen of the West to find quick transport to take their lobsters to market. Aeroplanes, it appears, are uneconomical and the crustaceans cannot survive a tardy journey and still be edible. (One wonders how much of the sea's produce that used to be eaten is now flung back as offal—the squid, for instance, and the smaller octopus, both excellent dishes when well cooked, and the ink of the squid makes a sharp black sauce.) Next, there is the work of the Scottish Tourist Board, brought to public attention recently in the National Register of Accommodation, which analyses bed-night accommodation in towns and counties, and takes into account not only hotels, but boarding-houses, hostels, farms and cottages. Statistics for Scottish tourism have obvious value, but what the ordinary traveller would like most of all to see is an upwards levelling of standards of accommodation and catering. They are very varied and lack the discipline of excellence that one finds in countries which long ago took their tourism seriously. Final ingredient is the newly published pamphlet, *The International Importance of Scottish Nationalism*, by Mr. Douglas Young, who can always be trusted to add a practised and controversial titbit to the concoction.

The culinary simile must obviously be carried over to the "feast of music and drama" in Edinburgh. It is difficult to write with cautious objectivity about this International Festival, especially when writing during the Festival, and in Edinburgh. It is a happy as well as an important event and it has transformed the atmosphere of the city. What does it mean to the rest of Scotland? In Sutherland and in the Rhinns of Galloway they will have heard of it, but why should they care? What Edinburgh does is primarily for Edinburgh alone. Yet the International Festival must, as a possible annual event, impinge on other Scottish towns, and on the scattered populations of the rural areas. Nothing, perhaps, is more exclusive than expensive art, but nothing a capital city undertakes, in a small country, can fail to have some influence on the rest of the country.

The people of Edinburgh, in spite of being carefully primed, were not quite aware of the whirl of activity that would sweep over their city. What with all those foreigners strolling in the streets and talking a hundred to the dozen, what with the City Fathers laying out plots of flowers in the main thoroughfares, it is making an exciting time. Even the tram-cars, with their hissing compressed-air brakes, are each fluttering a trinity of Union Jacks in the sunshine. The sunshine is the thing of course. Lack of it might not have marred the Festival, but with it there was a certainty of something unusual. Even if you cannot afford, or do not wish, to buy tickets for *Macbeth* or *The Sleeping Beauty* (and the majority are thus debarred), there is the spectacle at night of massed pipes and drums marching out of the dark maw of the Castle, over the drawbridge between the statues of Bruce and Wallace, to the esplanade lit by searchlights. It is the kind of dramatic display that the Scots—and the tourists—love greatly. (On the first evening the moon was above the Pentland Hills and the fretted chimneystacks of the Lawnmarket, below the Castle, were like stumps of trees in a dark jungle.)

It is such pageantry—there is a lot of it—it is the late night dancing in the open air in Princes Street Gardens, it is the general warm gaiety, the loosening of reserve, that strike the ordinary Scot in Edinburgh, and drive home the Festival idea to those who have not been inside a concert hall. There is a new atmosphere and people are enjoying it. It puts traditional dourness on the defensive, and Calvinism is made to stand in the corner. Though this year's Festival has still to run to its end—one hopes the initial success will not diminish—the plans for next year are already well in hand.

The internal working of the Festival within Scotland is seen at once in the Society of Independent Scottish Artists, hanging pictures on the "no jury" principle. This association has been organised, has found a gallery, and has arranged its first exhibition all within the month of August. It is an indication of what can be achieved given the incentive. In other spheres the internationalism of the Festival will act as a leaven. In spite of the "Scottish renaissance"—a phrase which is already more than ten years old—there has been too great an aptitude to keep warm whatever is Scottish and ignore the rest of the world. A breath of cosmopolitan air can do no harm.

Then there is Enterprise Scotland 1947, organised by the Scottish Committee of the Council of Industrial Design. What can one say about yet another exhibition? Is it churlish to suggest there is a basic sameness in them, that one enters almost anticipating the sense of exhaustion with which one will eventually leave, gorged with a multitude of facts, designs, effects, show-pieces and snippets of information that can never be properly assimilated? Enterprise Scotland is staged in the Royal Scottish Museum and the height of the museum roof has been used for an up-and-down architecture of design, a perpendicular scheme of soft draperies turned into those rigid patterns that come under the name of "solid geometry." There are vast streamers of tartan that vault, like airy sky-walks, over the squat remnants of the Flodden Wall (an ancient city defence, part of which is preserved *in situ* within the Museum). The exhibition, which is compressed laterally—the exhibits being cheek by jowl—will banish any lingering beliefs that this is still a land of haggis and whisky and little else. There is more being made in Scotland than Scotland itself guessed.

It is too early to say what effect the exhibition will have on foreign buyers and export generally, or whether indeed it will be of real benefit to Scotland. It is the newer and lighter industries that have to establish, from scratch, their overseas connections. Scottish heavy industry has always manufactured for the world. The tweed industry was to a large extent formed on export trade. The quality of the textiles was so high, and the price so prohibitive at home, that while tweeds were found on foreign backs, the Scotsman wore his ready-made suit of southern shoddy. It is still the case that the finest item in a working-man's dress is his cloth cap, made from scraps of authentic tweed left over from expensive suitings.

What of the dollar crisis, whose most recent developments came shortly before the Festival opened and before Scotland put its wares on show in the exhibition? To be truthful one must say that it has been rigorously kept in the background of the public mind. In Edinburgh the Festival retained pride of place. It shared this place with the astonishing weather. Such an order of things was to be expected. Economics are always with us. Sunshine and music are rarer visitors north of Tweed. Moreover, as the Scottish Nationalists would be the first to point out, there is little that Scotland can particularly do, as a separate country. Plans and policies must follow a larger pattern.

The continual depopulation of some parts of the countryside will have to be tackled and very energetically if more food is not to be lost. The figures of Scottish rural depopulation are disastrous to a proper balance between industry and agriculture. Fertile land is going out of production—in some cases for the first time in human memory—and in the North-west communities are simply vanishing. This is no new problem for Scotland, but it seems to have no present remedy. On the other hand, some interesting figures have been published about Scotland's contribution to Britain's economic life. With one-and-a-half million workers the following percentages of total British output were achieved in Scotland in 1946: Coal, 12.5%; New ships, 38%; Steel ingots and metal for castings, 13.9%; Builders' castings, 40%; Steam locomotives by private builders, 45%; Railway wagons, 16%; Steam-raising plant, 50%; Coalmining machinery, 25%; Sewing machines, 90%; Carpets, 33%; Oat products, 75%; Biscuits, 23%; Farm sales of fat stock, 24%; Sales of potatoes, 19%; and, of course, 100% in whisky and jute.

These figures, which are not exhaustive, are the hard facts of Scottish production, and in themselves give Scottish industry and agriculture an importance that is often ignored. In Scottish ambitions they are argumentative figures, backing the claims of Scotsmen to have more say in the direction of their country's affairs. A Scotsman—whether extreme or temperate in his views on nationalism—can argue that London is too far away for adequate control of such a productive region. If he also considers that St. Andrew's House in Edinburgh is only a relay station for London opinion, then his arguments have logical force. Whatever the competing merits of devolution and nationalism, there is more to it than stubborn sentiment.

NEIL MCCALLUM

The Arts and Entertainment

ENGLISH PICTURES

The Tate has a superb show of English pictures, most of which are back from travelling as missionaries for our culture. Hogarth, Blake, Constable, Turner—each of these has a room to himself. A fascinating exhibition, for even among the Italians or French, peoples that have been far richer than we in great painters, it would be hard to find four temperaments with so little in common.

Hogarth needs more space than he is given at the Tate; and his pictures are less happily hung than the others. Once again the *Shrimp-Girl* persuades one that in sheer gift he was inferior to no painter of his century. The cognoscenti, however, did not recognise his genius, and so he had to work for the Philistines. The resulting morality-pictures are unparalleled; but while one can always find in them new beauties, they remain backwaters. Not here, O Apollo . . .

The Blake collection contains all the works that the British Council have shown so successfully in Paris and Zurich, and some more. In Blake one can't go on finding new beauties—at any rate I can't. Though nothing made him so angry as to be told that his imagination was superior to his execution, the criticism stands. He lacked the Douanier's power of eluding or turning to profit his technical deficiencies. If he had been born later he might have learnt from the Primitives an idiom he could adapt to his vision. Essentially two-dimensional, like the Sienese, he imitated Michelangelo, or rather eighteenth-century engravings misrepresenting Michelangelo. Most unlucky. Moreover he was obsessed with the imaginary virtues of a "wiry" line, whereas his pastoral woodcuts reveal that he drew best when he drew least wirily. He was even less interested in appearances than Léger or Ben Nicholson; on the other hand, the composition of his designs looks uncalculated and is very hazardous, ranging from the ridiculous to the sublime. Blake's weaknesses are obvious, it is his strength that is difficult to define. One may notice that while his poetry declined, his painting improved; and in the Dante designs of his last years the genius is unswaddled—the composition of vast female forms, subject unidentified, seems to me his masterpiece. Rendered stupidly and pathetically arrogant by neglect, Blake was nevertheless a very great man, formidably innocent and disinterested; and enough of this moral and imaginative greatness percolates into his paintings to place them among the glories of the English school. He is the one religious painter we have produced since the Middle Ages.

Thirty years ago Constable was thought incomparably more important than Turner—and so, in the history of painting, he is. All the good nineteenth-century painters, except Ingres, were directly or indirectly his debtors. I think, indeed, that he was one of the most original of all painters. For my part I find his work (though not his character or opinions) immensely congenial. My younger painter friends, I find, usually don't. Constable they admire, Turner they love. (One may prophesy an analogous revival of enthusiasm for Wagner.) One's preference is a matter of generation and temperament, a matter illuminated by Sir Kenneth Clark when he compared Constable to Wordsworth and Turner to Shelley. Even those of us who are most decidedly Wordsworthian and Constabulary must confess the prodigious genius of Turner. The paint, the paint, the paint! Has anyone else ever so loved it for its own sweet sake? Take the *Farewell of Hero and Leander*: from a few yards away it looks flimsy, theatrical, romantical and dated. Come near to it, and you surrender to the intoxication of pigment. Or look at the Storm to gaze at which Turner had himself lashed to the mast. What other painter has been so potent a Prospero?

The Turners in this show have been chosen with great discrimination, except that some of them call out for cleaning. (In the view from Richmond, incidentally, the doll-like figures oddly and no doubt accidentally remind one of Goya.) The Constable room brings together the best works from the National Gallery and the V. and A., with staggering effect.

An epilogue to all this splendour is given in a roomful of little pictures by Rossetti and other pre-Raphaelites. How abrupt a decadence—though, if one likes the mood they try to express, one can probably put up with the hesitant drawing, unconsidered colour, and—worst of all—the amateurish disregard of tone. It must be said in favour of the pre-Raphaelites that they provided Max Beerbohm with some of his happiest subjects; and a number of his drawings are to be found in the same room. These set one meditating upon the unfairness of this sublunary world. Why should he be such a dab at caricature, when in the distinction of his prose he has no living rival?

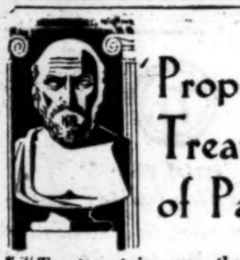
ROGER MARVELL

RADIO NOTES

A switch turns on almost the whole of the world. One of the weekly reports from India brings wrecked hovels of the Punjab, and the mutilated dead, with an immediacy that the printed word cannot achieve, into an English Sunday of ripe greengages and evening sun. Foresight sent to India three first-rate reporters. Imagination, more than foresight, sent with these reporters Louis MacNeice and Francis Dillon: balance and experience in words to express feeling, the Irish "attack." The result is more than reportting; it has a dramatic level equal to the rare best of our documentary films. Newspaper reports have covered the events; this report gave the agony, the vultures and the burning. Yet, far more clearly than in any words I have read, this gave also other aspects: authority of hope and courage in Lady Mountbatten's account of Indians healing and protecting casualties and fugitives of the opposed communities; Calcutta's miracles of peace at Gandhi's door; youngsters singing because free; the excitement in the voice of a Muslim student speaker, screaming in English so fast that I caught no word except that on which he was faded out, the word "unity." This is an art that widens and makes vivid the world for us.

Almost the whole of the world; but not ourselves to-day, not this country. American letters are frank; a sardonic commentary on contemporary thought in Ireland, and on considerable gaps in it, distracted me from thinking about the close weaving together of opposites in E. M. Forster's "American Impressions." The cultures of Dublin or Edinburgh, the contrasts of America or India, are reflected as freely as those of our own past. That past is given us, I think, with more courage than ever before: Chaucer and the Brontës, Vanbrugh's *Relapse* and old music I knew nothing of—Gibbons, East and Lawes—have in the past week or two been a reminder of the living energy within our borders. Even the readings of great English sermons, a form of eloquence not notably to my taste, seemed shocking in comparison with the timidity of the B.B.C.'s reporting of our thoughts and feelings and acts to-day. If we were judged mainly from our radio, we would seem to be an inhibited people sliding into one of its greater crises dumbly. If we are not that, we should devise some release from the empty primness of those who look after us at home.

It is not simply a question of more freedom for discussion of political and economic issues. We should not gain much, at the moment, by having more of the nostalgic Churchill or of the non-committal dryness of Herbert Morrison. Take the effort made to bring the listener some impression of the scientists' discussions in Dundee, at the British Association Conference. Competently but neutrally Mr. Haslett brought to the microphone professors who whizzed through five-minute lectures on the discoveries, the possibilities opened and dangers seen, in their varying fields of work. The general effect was arbitrary, dis-



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connected, and "potted." Yet there was a theme, and a central argument in this conference: the theme "swords into ploughshares," the argument stated by those who believe that teams of scientists can be mobilised, as they were in war, for operational research that will help to answer the question: how in the future do we as a nation get our living? Between this claim and that opposed to it, perhaps falsely, the claim of "pure science," research on fundamentals, there was no need to choose; what was needed was an effort to group the contributions round this theme and argument, questioning and selecting not for snappy items of "interest to the general public," but for varying aspects of how science affects the overriding public interest, the present crisis in our affairs and in our national will.

TOM WINTRINGHAM

THE MOVIES

"The October Man," at The Odeon
"Repeat Performance," at The New Gallery

Mr. Eric Ambler, the author of several thrillers that have been filmed, himself writes and produces *The October Man*. It is, as we should expect, an intelligent job. The hero suffers a brain injury in an accident which leaves him (after a year in hospital) with guilt feelings and a terror of trains. He "takes it quietly" in a suburban hotel, works steadily at his old job, falls in love, but this convalescence is violently interrupted by murder. He is suspected by the police, and not only that, there is gossip to contend with and the possibility, or fear, that without knowing it he may have committed the crime of which he is accused. The psychological tension—with trains going by at night, gramophone next door, whispering behind backs, police quietly badgering—is well contrived, and an exciting climax runs down the real murderer and ends, for the hero clasping his girl on the dreaded railway bridge, a period of mental strain. Few thrillers, that have no pretension beyond thrilling, have been more coherently or neatly designed. Besides Mr. Mills, giving one of his most solid performances, there is quietly good acting from a largish cast, including such players as Catherine Lacey, Edward Chapman, and Felix Aylmer. Miss Joan Greenwood agreeably provides the sad-looking heroine.

And there perhaps one would leave *The October Man*, an admirable specimen of its kind, if it weren't for the memory of other films deriving from Mr. Ambler—notably *Journey Into Fear*—which have stirred us more. That piece of wonderful bluff was directed, of course, by Orson Welles. Mr. Roy Baher, with a better story in *The October Man*, has taken no such liberties of style and decoration, and the result is almost too unpretentious. Life in the suburban hotel appears flat, without the fascinations of flatness. Mr. Ambler hasn't, of course, the gifts of a Siminon or a Graham Greene, but now that he has taken a more active part in film-making, he must see to it that the essential imaginative touches do not drop out of his pieces.

The week's import, *Repeat Performance*, would have provided better value in cigarettes.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

BALLET

FIRST nights are seldom best nights, especially when a ballet company, like de Basil's *Original Ballet Russe* at Covent Garden, is of recent formation, and is compelled to revive a number of masterpieces in quick succession and with far too few rehearsals. So I prefer to devote the few lines allotted me to recording my second thoughts on *Graduation Ball*, which is this season's novelty in London, though it was composed by Lichine in 1939, and had its first performance in that year in Australia, after the Iron Curtain had clamped down upon the West. *Graduation Ball* is outwardly a very slight affair: what Mr. Buckle has called the perfect "Chandelier" type of ballet. But like all Lichine's creations it has a lyrical value beyond mere entertainment; a quality of beauty and power to move which I seldom found in ballets much more ambitious, and some enchanting choreographic invention. The dancers the other night enabled one to enter that "strange and admirable state" which, as Valéry once said, is the very opposite of *ennui*. Purists tell me that Dokoudovsky overdid the intoxication of the cadet's dance; but though he has not Lichine's admirable elusiveness of expression I found his ecstasy of movement as irresistible as if at one's first ball. I noticed for the first time one leap of Morosova into his arms, of a precise but reckless beauty which took one's breath away, as also a subtle momentary change of tempo and elevation in Jeanmaire's exhibition dance which lifted it above mere virtuosity. Barbara Lloyd is the only balletomane one has ever loved, and Orloff, as the drummer, has miraculously survived eight years of applause. I can do no more than notice that the Dutch dancer Grinwis is a subtle parodist and that Skouratoff, who danced the Scotsman, with Larkina as Giselle, is a classical dancer of unusual beauty and nobility of carriage. Might he not sometimes relieve Jasinsky in *Les Sylphides*? He would be a perfect James in *La Sylphide*, and Larkina perhaps one day a real, not merely a *divertissement*, Giselle.

The revival of *Firebrand*, which I saw the same evening, was spirited but not glamorous, except for the music. Morosova danced extremely well. Jasinsky was a charming Tsarevitch and Dokoudovsky impressive as the Demon King. The Princess wore a strictly Utility dress and shoes at her wedding: was she setting a good example? Goncharova's decor had worn well.

BERYL DE ZOETE

THEATRE

"The Chiltern Hundreds" at the Vaudeville

One must applaud Mr. Douglas Home's versatility. From *Now, Barabbas*, a prison play that offended some people by its realism, he has turned to a decayed earldom not very far from Blandings Castle and a political scene so unrealistic, so "sporting" and fairly divided in its good-humoured comments on labour and capitalism that the ghost voices of Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet seem to call to each other "well played, sir" over the sandwiches at each crack of bat and ball. How should one divide the credit between author and actor for this charming study of an impoverished and unpolitical earl? Alone, even without Mr. Michael Shepley's superb butler Beecham, who takes his aspirin in a glass of port, Lord Lister, played by Mr. A. E. Matthews, would make *The Chiltern Hundreds* well worth a visit. In our appreciation there is a touch of nostalgia. How far we have all travelled from naturalness when it can appear like eccentricity, for this is the portrait of a completely natural man—the gangling awkward figure with the M.C.C. tie who demonstrates a rabbit-snare to his butler among the breakfast debris only because that is the most convenient moment, who pots at foxes from the drawing-room window because his gun is handy and the range is right, who quite unconsciously treats every man and woman as his equal.

But the story? The story never really matters much so long as Mr. Matthews is there, awkward on his legs, moulding the grey kindly face with his vague hand as though it were a lump of putty, the drooping handkerchief like a dim memory of a more dandified youth, the hair like an old mop, stiff, rebellious and very very worn, the sudden impartial outbreaks against unreason in human affairs. The other characters cannot hide the weakness of the plot. We never for a moment believe in the earl's son or his American fiancée, and occasionally in their relationship sentimentality seems about to break through as in the second act of a musical comedy. English farce writers should learn to be tough about love or eliminate it from their plots. But these are criticisms that belong to the mood of the morning after. One should be grateful for the mood of the evening; we experience too little nowadays that is light and evanescent to complain that it is hard to recapture.

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Correspondence

THE POLICE AND THE FASCISTS

SIR,—Mr. Pritt's article entitled "The Police and the Fascists" which was published in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION on August 23rd is so misleading, both as regards the instructions given to the Metropolitan Police and as regards the practice of the police, that I cannot leave it unanswered.

The instructions given to the Metropolitan Police by the Commissioner make it quite clear that police officers present at a lawful public meeting should not ask for the name and address of any person unless requested to do so by the chairman of the meeting, and then only if the police have a reasonable suspicion that that person has committed an offence against the Public Meeting Act, 1908. These instructions are clearly in accordance with the terms of the Act of 1908, as amended by the Public Order Act, 1936, and special inquiries which I caused to be made after the publication of Mr. Pritt's article have confirmed that the practice of the Metropolitan Police is in accordance with their instructions. The Police Inspector who is said to have explained that the police "have made it a settled practice to take the names and addresses of all persons indicated by the chairman" denies that he made any such statement, while the police officer who, at the request of the chairman, took the name and address of an interrupter at the meeting specifically referred to by Mr. Pritt, did suspect that an offence had been committed.

Mr. Pritt also questions the propriety of the police giving to the chairman of a meeting the name and address of a person which have been taken by the police in pursuance of the Act, but any such criticism of the police is unjustified. Before the passing of the Public Order Act, 1936, there was no power to require any person, who at a lawful public meeting acts in a disorderly manner for the purpose of preventing the transaction of the business for which the meeting was called together, to give his name and address, and the result was that the Public Meeting Act, 1908, had become practically a dead letter. Section 6 of the Public Order Act, 1936, conferred powers on the police for the purpose, but during the debates on the Bill it was made abundantly clear that there was no intention that the responsibility for prosecuting alleged offenders against the Public Meeting Act should rest solely, or even mainly, on the police.

In fact, as originally introduced, the 1936 Bill contained a provision specifically prohibiting the police from prosecuting for offences against the Act of 1908, but this provision was dropped because it was felt in certain quarters of the House that the sole responsibility for prosecuting should not rest on the promoters of a meeting and that there might be flagrant and outrageous cases which the police could properly regard as raising a public matter and that in such cases it would be proper for the police to prosecute. The then Home Secretary (Sir John Simon, as he then was) said in Parliament that he wished to "give the plainest possible notice here that my conception of the wording of this Bill is that it will be for the promoters of the meeting to take their proper responsibility." This view of the position was accepted by Parliament and is the basis of the police practice. Thus, though normally it is for the promoters of a meeting to decide whether or not to institute proceedings, it is the duty of the constable who takes the name and address of a person at a public meeting to report the occurrence to his superior officers who may themselves in proper cases decide to prosecute. J. CHUTER EDE

Whitehall, London, S.W.1.

SIR,—There is one point which seems to have been missed by Mr. O. H. Parsons and the National Council of Civil Liberties. Under the National Registration Act, 1939, Section 6 (4) "A Constable in uniform or any person authorised for the purpose under the said Regulations may require a person, who, under the Regulations, is for the time being responsible for the custody of an Identity Card to produce the card to him, or, if the person so required fails to produce it when the requirement is made, to produce it within such time to such person and at such place as may be prescribed."

Non-compliance with a demand for the production of an Identity Card is punishable by imprisonment for one month and/or a fine not exceeding £5.

If, therefore, a citizen is asked for his Identity Card instead of for his name and address, he is compelled to produce it. However, the Identity Card need not necessarily be produced at once, but must be produced within two clear days to the person prescribed by the Regulations. It is, perhaps, a moot point, but I believe that any person ordered by a police officer to produce his Identity Card in the circumstances envisaged by your correspondent would be legally justified in refusing to produce it at the meeting and in offering to produce it after the meeting or on the following day. J. GLEDHILL

8 Harley Wood,
Todmorden.

GERMAN YOUTH

SIR,—May I send you a belated reply to Mr. Christopher Cobb's letter? (NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, August 2nd). I can see nothing sinister or unusual in the fact that German Universities are overcrowded. So after six years of war are our own, with young men resuming their interrupted studies. To say that "the bulk are there to avoid doing an honest job of work" is grossly unjust. I met many professors, and all of them said that their young people are working harder than students have ever worked in Germany. They are doing it, moreover, under the harshest physical conditions, miserably underfed. Those are lucky who can share a tiny room with another, even in a bunker (air-raid refuge). At Göttingen three hundred are sleeping on the floor in shelters. Three of the Universities I visited are in heavily bombed towns. Here the students, quartered in distant villages, may have to spend three hours in getting to and from their classes. Mr. Cobb's advice that they should go and dig coal might be addressed with equal cogency and equal folly to Oxford and Cambridge. A civilised community must have its doctors, scientists and teachers. Or does Mr. Cobb think, as the Nazi did, that a conquered people should be deprived of higher education? H. N. BRAILSFORD

PALESTINE

SIR,—In your issue of August 23rd, two of your correspondents accused me of being biased, woolly-headed, etc., because in my recent article on Palestine I had analysed the causes of Terrorism and advocated Partition, with increased immigration during the transition period, as a remedy.

I postponed answering until authentic news of the Uno Commission's report were available. Now that the recommendations of this body of neutral fact-finders, whose nationalities range from Sweden to Uruguay, are known to be on the same biased and woolly-headed lines, no further comment on my part seems to be required. ARTHUR KOESTLER

ALIEN CONCERT ARTISTS

SIR,—In your issue of August 9th your music critic remarks that "considerable pressure is constantly being exercised by professional organisations, the more bigoted of whose members would dearly like to exclude all foreign musicians whatsoever."

This is exaggerated and unjust. We have our Chauvinists, like all professions, but I do not know any who advocate total exclusion. What we do aim at is to stem the flood of foreign artists of no great

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D. H. R. Brearley,
Incorporated Society of Musicians. *Secretary*

RUHR VALLEY AUTHORITY

Sir,—Since Mr. Cadbury has described the mooted Ruhr Valley Authority as "based on similar principles to those of the Tennessee Valley Scheme," it may be pertinent to point out two fundamental and important differences between the schemes in question. The Tennessee Valley Scheme, whatever may be its shortcomings from a Socialist point of view, is financed with American capital only, and it is directed only by Americans. There is, therefore, no possibility of it being a medium for foreign intervention in the internal affairs of the United States, though the possibility is not precluded of it being run by Americans on lines other than those which would be in the best interests of those which it immediately affects or of the American people.

The Ruhr Valley Scheme, as proposed by you and approved by Mr. Cadbury, is to have its capital provided "exclusively by European Governments and the U.S.A." and would be managed by Germans "assisted by European and American technicians" in accordance with policy "laid down by a Board, composed of representatives of the Member States and also of the future Germany." In other words, Germany would be allowed only minority representation on the Board, and even that not until some date "in the future." Though there may be strong arguments in favour of such external control in this instance and also in that of the Rhine Valley Scheme, which is mentioned by Mr. Cadbury, and though it may be practicable to impose such control on Germany, it cannot be over-emphasised, I suggest, that the same cannot be said of the Danube Valley Scheme which also Mr. Cadbury has mentioned. The fact that the parentage of the last-mentioned of these three schemes is attributed to Unilevers cannot but make one wonder whether its (apparently casual) association with the first two schemes by Mr. Cadbury is not significant.

When I was in Rumania last December, I found that the less naïve representatives of the new regime there, aware of the parentage of the Danube Valley Scheme, and remembering that Unilevers were not unhelpful to Nazi Germany's preparations for the last war, were inclined to look askance at the scheme, though fully aproving of it in principle. They wondered whether it was not something like our famous Ground-nut Scheme for Central Africa, and designed primarily for the more efficient exploitation of the Danube Valley as a camouflaged "colony." The organisation at that time by the U.S. Mission, whose attitude towards Rumania was no secret, of a photographic exhibition showing the excellence of the Tennessee Valley Scheme in which there was a scale map showing how such a scheme might be developed for the Danube Valley, seemed to suggest that there might be something in that suspicion. The present coupling of the scheme with schemes for the Ruhr and Rhine of the character which has been advocated will doubtless confirm that impression; for it must be obvious that those whose money is invested in Unilevers' factories in Western Germany would not approve of the establishment of independent, and probably State-owned factories of a similar type in the Danubian countries, though these would clearly be an essential feature of a balanced Danube Valley Scheme designed for the maximum welfare of the Danubian peoples.

Edgar P. Young

CHARLES CUNNINGHAM BOYCOTT

Sir,—Dramatic licence, William Whitebait suggests, may have been at work in the film "Captain Boycott." The reservation seems to me to be just, although I have not seen the film but have personal knowledge of its subject. At Bungay in my early boyhood, I became accustomed to the sight on market (and other) days of a grey-bearded, upright, slim figure in blue serge knickerbockered Norfolk suit, driven over from Flixton (3 miles away) in a dogcart by a cockaded coachman whose face specially caught my fancy owing to its apparent likeness to that of the Dalmatian hound speeding faithfully along underneath the turn-out. The greybeard was Captain Boycott who, since 1886, had been land agent to the Adair family at Flixton Hall (the present heir to the baronetcy is Allan Adair, who commanded the Guards Armoured Division when it entered Antwerp in the late war). Charles Cunningham Boycott died in June, 1897, at the age of 65. He was very much a Suffolk man; Burgh St. Peter's list of rectors has the name of Boycott several times from 1600 onwards and Boycott's father was one of them. Burgh is close to that other Flixton of north-east Suffolk where there is a famous Decoy, and its ruined castle, still frowning at the marshes on the edge of Broadland, was a headquarters of Boadicea till the Romans occupied it. Sent to school at Blackheath, Charles Boycott was commissioned to the 39th Foot (Dorset Regiment) when he was 18, but on his marriage he left the Army and with his wife went to Achill Island off the west coast of Ireland to win from the soil the competence which as a married junior officer he could not secure in the Service. The young couple displayed considerable resourcefulness and fortitude and won through. In 1873 they went to the mainland on Boycott's appointment as agent to the Earl of Erne's estates in County Mayo where eventually Boycott acquired some acres of his own. In 1880 the Irish agrarian agitation had taken a new turn. The leaders decided on ostracism of those who would not obey their decrees, among which was the fixing of rents at figures below what the landlords had prescribed. Whatever may have been the justification for this arbitary action, Boycott's position was clear when Lord Erne's estates were selected for the application of it. He could not, as an agent, do anything but uphold his employer's legal rights and he thus became the first and eponymous victim of the new weapon. Troops were supplied to guard the "Orangemen" brought in to harvest his crops on the shores of Lough Mask. Pressure grew and the Boycotts had to seek refuge for some time in a barn where they were succoured by friendly villagers at much personal risk. In 1881 they left Ireland and went to the U.S.A. on holiday. Five years later came the appointment to Flixton by the Adairs, who also had estates in Ireland. The work at Flixton was interrupted on at least two occasions: in December 1888 Boycott went up to London to give evidence before the Parnell Commission; one holiday was spent revisiting Ireland, where he was shown that no personal malice was borne him for, recognised at a public gathering in Dublin, he was generously cheered. The Irish no doubt felt, as Whitebait does, that Boycott's army-trained sense of duty was unswerving. Certainly he was a "character" and there are many stories to show that he was respected and liked at Flixton. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of one which alleges that the weathervane cock of Flixton Church still has the hole made by Boycott's pistol fired to express the marksman's disgust at the wind's contumacy when rain was badly wanted for the Flixton crops and the sight of the cock from Boycott's garden near by ruffled the ardent agent's equanimity. Making all allowances for the passage of time, my own recollections of his personality are of a kindly, austere, punctilious and dignified man of the type which the Victorian age fortunately produced to the great advantage of our country. But, as the Hollywood magnate sensed, when against his own and his expert's judgment, he insisted on his celluloid duke wearing a coronet at breakfast, film heroes are not made of such.

Edwin Haward

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

At present the Soviet Union excites much less sympathy than ever before among English writers. Nor is this due chiefly to the clashes between the Kremlin and the Foreign Office: intellectuals in this country incline to be congenital *frondeurs*, and, so far as they are political at all, to lean over backwards in their distaste for even a suspicion of Jingoism. What has alienated them is, first, the methodical inhumanity of the Russian authorities; and, secondly, the persistent and recently intensified campaign against all liberty of thought. The persecution of Zoschenko, in particular, has had much the same effect upon writers as the odious retention of the fifteen "Russian wives" upon the man in the street. For Zoschenko, besides being an admirable artist, showed his countrymen as still the humorous, genial, large-hearted people we had learnt to love in the Russian books of the last century.

Revolutions, we know, are usually followed by a period during which the new regime suspends freedom in order to maintain order; then, when its authority is generally accepted, it becomes tolerant. The Soviet Government has been established now for over thirty years, during which it has stamped out internal opposition with a rigour, and on a scale, unparalleled in history. Why, then, are the restrictions on freedom more severe to-day than ever? Ferrero declares that governments seek to inspire fear only when they feel fear. But the notion that there is in the U.S.S.R. widespread and dangerous discontent with the regime seems to me what is described as "wishful thinking"; in which case we must seek another explanation for the relentless hatred of liberty of thought.

Many of us believe that such liberty offers the only hope, a dim one, of any important improvement of the human condition. It is conceivable that an advance in our knowledge of applied psychology might make education enormously more effective. Such an advance, however, is most improbable in a society where there is not the utmost liberty of thought, since psychology is the science that provokes the most violent and widespread antagonism. Those who, for these or other reasons, consider the Soviet Government a menace to human progress naturally succumb to indignation. Indignation, however, is not desirable or even licit unless preceded by an attempt at understanding; and I would therefore vehemently recommend all who cherish liberty of thought to read Mr. George Reavey's *Soviet Literature To-day* (*Lindsay Drummond*, 8*s*. 6*d*.), which contains the best account I have met of the principles and conditions governing Soviet writers. I have read hardly any of the writers he discusses, since most of those who have been translated are unendurably tedious. But he appears uncommonly objective, offering a large number of facts interspersed with very few personal comments; and, so far as I know, his accuracy is not disputed. Let us examine the picture that emerges.

In the first years after the Revolution experiment in all the arts was encouraged. Then, just as the makers of the Revolution were successively weeded out, so all aesthetic experiments became taboo. Since 1934 "Socialist realism" has been imposed on all, and this entails "socialist content, national form, realistic representation." The insistence upon tradition, patriotism and morality has become what Mr. Reavey calls with polite meiosis "almost Victorian." To-day writers and other sorts of artist are allowed one theme only: "the moral greatness of the Soviet people and its uninterrupted ties with the glorious past, the heroic present and the great future."

One can understand this only if one realises the Russian Government's conviction that conflict between Communist and Capitalist powers is continuous and inevitable. To maintain "war psychology" in the public is therefore essential. So no Soviet writer now risks any idealistic stuff about internationalism and the brotherhood of man. A poet is held up as exemplary because:—

> his verses were penetrated by a sense of fundamental distance between the two worlds and a triumphant feeling of pride in Soviet man who in the spacious squares of Paris or amid the skyscrapers of New York, was conscious of another and more perfect order of life, of other and loftier ideals.

To reinforce this contempt for "foreign devils," writers must be indefatigable in exalting the virtues of the more ruthless Tsars. The unfortunate Kistylev, who wrote an historical novel about Ivan the Terrible was accused of making him "too ordinary and insufficiently dignified." A scene where he is made to walk along the walls of the Kremlin in the company of a foreigner is declared to be improbable since "in the eyes of the people the Tsar was a sacred personage and could not be seen in such proximity to an outlander." And similarly a play about Ivan had to be withdrawn because "the interpretation of the Tsar's character was not sufficiently dignified and did not reflect the due majesty of the personage." (What hot water Shakespeare, were he a Soviet citizen, would get into for his shocking pictures of the hero of Agincourt!)

To guarantee security from such errors artists receive advice from the *Literary Gazette:*

> Without serious work of the consciousness, without a deep study of the theory of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, without the clarification of the essence of the contemporary process of struggle, the artist cannot fulfil his high mission, that of being "the engineer" of human souls, of being the educator and teacher of the people.

Those who are Party members, moreover, are now being made to attend ideological courses and lectures to brush up their Marxism.

The supreme heresy is "formalism," a word used to denounce any novelty of style as well as any deviation from didacticism. One consequence, for instance, of the campaign against "formalism" was a return to the classical ballet, though this is far more formal—in any ordinary sense of the term—than later developments of the art. Similarly, the architect Burov calls successfully for "a return to the beautiful and tried old styles"; and only a few weeks ago *Pravda* denounced the influence of Picasso, though he has been for two years a Party member: so contemptibly bourgeois a way of painting, it said, would be quite inadmissible in the U.S.S.R. Tchaikovsky—such is the insistence upon "tried styles"—is exalted, despite his morbidity, as the most national of composers. The suspicious are tireless in tracking and ferreting out offenders against orthodoxy: Shostokavitch's music is found to contain errors no less horrible than those in Golavoshenko's theatrical criticism or the lyrics of Pasternak and Akhmatova. Zoschenko's last novel, which reveals the influence of Pavlov (whom I took to be a pillar of orthodoxy), was condemned because "the most elementary forms of social behaviour are undermined in it, and cynicism in relation to women is preached." Severe strictures were inflicted not only upon the periodical in which it appeared, but upon the praesidium of the Writers' Union for not having organised a discussion of the book before publication. During the war, it seems, the atmosphere was less rigid than it had been ten years previously; now "Soviet literature has entered a new and more restrictive period," signalised by a Conference of Prose Writers held in Moscow last year. According to the *Literary Gazette,*

> it was evident that they were united in a truly orthodox attitude to the immortal traditions of Russian literature, bound together in political unanimity and a profound idea and critical attitude of their high calling.

One must, in fairness, remember that the Russians have never known a liberal regime; and Mr. Reavey points out that even in Nineteenth Century Russia it was usual to judge works of art chiefly by their social and political message. I think, indeed, one may already find the Soviet attitude with all its rigour in Tolstoy's *What is Art?* His preference for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* not only to all Shakespeare but to his own *War and Peace* represents the *reductio ad absurdum* of anti-aesthetic criticism. One must agree that there is no reason why a writer or painter should not devote himself to propaganda, provided that his powers and wishes lead him to it. If, however, only propagandist art is permissible, we ought to burn most of English poetry.

It would probably be a mistake to attribute to Soviet writers in general the resentment that we in the West should feel if similarly shackled. Mr. Reavey throws no light on this matter beyond a passing reference to the critics' fear of being accused of "formalism," a fear which apparently prevents them discussing any part of a work other than its message. Probably it is only the exceptionally gifted writers, a Pasternak, a Zoschenko, an Olusha, who feel thwarted, and whose imagination is maimed; and I suspect that most Russian writers follow the Party line unquestioningly, having been conditioned to desire nothing else, and therefore consider they have nothing to complain of. I do not make this suggestion to palliate the Soviet policy towards art. On the contrary. To destroy an artist's wish for liberty of expression is, I maintain, far more wicked than merely to prevent him using this liberty.

> The atmosphere of Russian literature throughout the 19th century was not a healthy one. The censor was constantly in the background. . . . To be a writer or critic in those days, and to have the strength of one's convictions, was almost tantamount to asking for a term of exile or penal servitude.

Mr. Reavey qualifies these statements by pointing out also that "it is remarkable how much 'dynamite' was nevertheless allowed to appear in print." Indeed it is. And no precedent for Soviet practice can be found in Tsarist Russia any more than in Seventeenth Century France, or even in Nazi Germany. Such autocratic governments sought, with varying degrees of energy and success, to suppress works that might weaken their authority. None of them, however, attempted or desired to suppress art that was non-political. The demand that every writer, painter and musician should devote himself exclusively to explicit or implicit propaganda is, so far as I know, without a precedent.

The nearest parallel in the history of Western Europe can probably be found in the Dark Ages, when secular art almost disappeared. This goes to confirm the familiar notion that we shall come nearest to understanding Soviet Communism if we think of it as a religion. No religion has produced missionaries more convinced, more obedient, more fearless, more selfless; and modern science has provided this religion with methods of propaganda and persecution far more effective than any employed by the first followers of Mohammed or by the Spanish Inquisitors. Moreover, this religion is so puritanical that it allows no secular writing or painting or music. Finally, it is a religion that, at least in its present phase, shows itself no less nationalistic than that of the ancient Hebrews.

What one may call the theologians of Communism profess some highly irrational doctrines derived ultimately from the ill-regulated imagination of Hegel. Look, however, for the most active principle of this faith, and you find, combined with patriotism of the most old-fashioned sort, "a belief in man's ability to conquer nature, to solve the most difficult problems, and to make or create history." This belief, which every Soviet artist is under an obligation to propagate, is one that has never in history succeeded in attracting any great poet, or indeed any mind of the first order. (While it may be thought to inform the unofficial philosophy of the U.S.A. no less than the official philosophy of the U.S.S.R., it gains no support from American intellectuals.) So naïve a view of the human condition can be called "humanism" only by an abuse of language. If the omnipotence of a benevolent God is difficult to accept, the omnipotence of man is a doctrine that goes beyond the limits of credulity—or would, if credulity had any limits. Such a belief, however, may seem so advantageous as to satisfy pragmatists of its "truth";

and the Soviet ideologues, consciously or not, have adapted the doctrines of William James into their philosophy. It appears that the epithet "objective" is now used only as a term of abuse.

Art may be considered the opium of the intelligentsia, and this is probably one reason why the Soviet Government regards it with such alarm. Some phases of the art even of foreign devils are thought admissible; some modern British authors are popular; so are Dickens and Thackeray. Dante has recently been translated into Russian, and Renaissance pictures are still on view. The works, on the other hand, of the French Impressionists and their successors are concealed, as if they might corrupt the virtue of the Muscovites. While elaborate ideological reasons could doubtless be found for this apparent inconsistency, I suspect that the explanation is simple. It requires strength of character and principle not to wish to stop others from enjoying forms of happiness one cannot share. Politically minded men—certainly no less than the rest of us—feel the impulse to suppress what they do not understand. And in the U.S.S.R. no one has any power except the most politically minded. This, indeed, is the most odious—and most cautionary—feature of the Soviet regime.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

SECOND READING

John Buchan. By HIS WIFE AND FRIENDS. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

By the chance of a white night I read this book twice. At the first reading I thought it a poorish symposium of eulogies roughly assembled in a narrative by Lady Tweedsmuir. The second reading changed my mind; I thought it interesting and attractive. On reflection, I think both views justified.

To begin with the harsher opinion. His wife tells the story of John Buchan from the time when she met him; that is when he was on the *Spectator* staff, after his return from Milner's Kindergarten in South Africa. She continues the narrative till his death, interpolating appreciations of him by Walter Elliot, Catharine Carswell, A. L. Rowse and others as they seem to come *à propos*. Nothing can make such a method other than clumsy. And there is a good deal of waste stuff; lists of friends without faces, either because they are left just as names or because they are too flatteringly described; and, far drearier, accounts of official occasions, especially in Canada.

Reading again, and skipping all that, one finds the residuum, the life of a good and lovable man who retained through a career of success, both academic and financial, simplicity, modesty, and devotion to a romantic sense of public duty. The contributions of his friends, and even more the writing of his wife and son, reveal him as full of a loving-kindness which endeared him to an immense number of people. And the mere tale of his achievements, seeing that all of them meant hard work and that he was often in great pain, prove a demoniac energy and a many-sidedness which had nothing to do with dilettantism. To be a partner in Nelsons in the great days of the Sevenpennies, and a director of Reuters, and an M.P. and the author of fifty-five books—not to mention a fisherman, and a mountaineer, and a scholar and the owner of an Oxfordshire estate with a house which strangely managed to look Scots Baronial! Of his personal quality this book leaves no doubt; the same traits recur over and over again: ability, zest for living, gaiety, magnanimity. Especially this last.

Those beyond the circle of his acquaintance must feel slightly suspicious—as Catharine Carswell says that she did before she knew him—of such a success-story. But although he must have made a fortune, and certainly enjoyed the fruits of wealth, he seems to have been indifferent to money as such. He cannot have been indifferent to success and social advancement, and indeed, seeing that he grew up in the Nineties, when all the finenesses of English life, including the best company, went with wealth, it is hard to blame him. Being a Scot rooted in the good soil of the ministry, he never forgot the pit he was dug from. But the English ruling caste, always eager to strengthen itself by recruiting talent from below, opened its gilded gate to what must have seemed, then, an enchanted domain. Maybe he saw all that privilege as romantic; it seems probable, since Mrs. Carswell writes that he hung Elsfield with copies of portraits of old Earls of Caithness, who bore the name of Buchan, but with whom his kinship was speculative. Silly, or touching—perhaps both; childlike anyhow. And part of his make-up, else he would not so have revelled in being High Commissioner for the General Assembly, which is really an interesting and historically romantic post; or consented to be Governor-General of Canada, with the weary ceremonial and enforced amiability of such a job.

And yet—— Why was Buchan, who grew up in a poor parish, who was both good and intelligent, a Conservative? Romance gives no answer to a problem on which I have thought long. Of course good and stupid people are natural Tories, just as are bad and clever ones. But the wise and merciful man on the side of things as they are—as they were fifty years ago—that beats reason.

And yet—— Why did Buchan, who could have been a great writer, choose to be a second-rate one? Why did he, who wrote pure and telling English, who had the born story-teller's gift, waste himself on big business, and on pot-boilers like the *Times History of the War*? Possibly Walter Elliot, whose passage from *Long Distance*, all bubble and burble, is the best thing in the book, particularly in perception, has got it:

> The key was enjoyment. Enjoyment coupled with an underlying diffidence. Diffidence drove him to try his hand at all these things.

Walter Elliot, to my great pleasure, assesses Buchan's work as I do. It is always nice to find backing for one's prejudices. And it is fair to admit that we are not in line with Sir George Trevelyan and Mr. A. L. Rowse, both of whom rank the histories as important, and the life of Walter Scott as great. Sir George calls it the best one-volume biography in the language, Rowse a "beautiful book." I confess to having read it with bitter disappointment, except for the first chapter with its drum-roll of Border names. I felt Scott just a lay-figure who never comes alive, just as I feel his Montrose and Augustus and Julius Caesar; I have not read the *Cromwell*.

But Mr. Elliot thinks the tales the best; and I agree; and the same ones. All my generation will be grateful for the *Thirty Nine Steps* series; for they were like the three drops of water with which Lazarus yearly moistened Dives' Hell-scorched mouth. They gave us some hours of anodyne in the torment of that other war. But the best of the books are *Prester John*, which made readers hope greatness for its author; the autobiography *Memory Hold-the-Door*, so reticent and objective, told like another man's story; and the far more revealing *Sick Heart River*. These books are near the classic line.

It is evidence of the higher things within Buchan's compass, that even as one reads the books one is irritated because they are not better. For one accepts the work of intrinsically second-rate authors for what it is, without blame. The flaw in Buchan is obvious enough; he was a lover of his fellows and he never succeeded in portraying a living man. *Kidnapped* is a thriller, and by the end of it the reader loves David Balfour and Alan Breck like a pair of brothers. At the end of *Greenmantle* one cannot remember Buchan's stuffed though noble dummies t'other from which. And the women are not even stuffed; they are paper dolls. There is one attempt at a character in Dickson MacCunn, after Baillie Nichol Jarvie—but what miles after! Surely if Buchan had denied himself business and politics, he could have fused his humanity with his minstrelsy; and after all, the gate of the oak-planted park of English success is open to the writer as well as to the man of affairs.

FREDA WHITE

ANGLO-CATHOLICISM

Religion in the England of To-morrow. By SIDNEY DARK. *Skeffington.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The main contentions of Sidney Dark's latest book may be summarised as follows: Men have a need for religion, and are incommoded if the need is not satisfied. The need is not likely to be satisfied by a religion which fights shy of dogma and soft-pedals the supernatural, in appeasement of science—"there is no drive and no inspiration in the dreary platitudes of Ethical Churches, or the semi-intellectual qualifications of Modernism." On the contrary, the value of religion lies precisely in the fact that it *is* mysterious, more particularly in an age such as the present, which is apt to think that it understands everything because it has made a number of discoveries as to how physical nature works. The plausibility of dogmatic Christianity, with its insistence on the supernatural, stands or falls with the acceptance of Theism. If you believe that the universe was created by God and that He is interested in His creatures, then it is not unplausible to suppose that He sent His Son into the world to give them an example of a good and beautiful life in order to save them from the consequences of their sins, and to render them fit to enjoy the happiness that awaits them hereafter. Granted that this *was* God's intention, then the Incarnation suggests itself as, at least, an understandable way of carrying it out. Granted the Incarnation, the rest of Christianity follows naturally enough.

But Christianity may be variously interpreted, and the distinctive feature of Mr. Dark's interpretation is its insistence on *works*. He points to the many frustrations and evils of human life which are due to "remediable, social conditions," insists that Christianity is a religion of fellowship and that a good Christian is also and inevitably a good citizen—"the hope of a personal eternal bliss—is to me a travesty of the New Testament," and concludes that "the first and most valuable influence of genuine religion is to excite a keen and critical interest in politics." Since one of the objects of politics is the removal of evil social conditions, it follows that the politics which the good Christian will embrace are the politics of Socialism.

Yet a Socialist Utopia without religion would be as cruel and materialistic as a capitalist society without religion; in this connection it is not, Mr. Dark thinks, without significance that the *Daily Worker*, organ of zealous Communism, possesses an extremely competent racing tipster.

The general conclusion is that the Christian religion must be revived and that the parish church, which is based upon a geographical social unit and serves men in their capacity as neighbours, must be at once the instrument and the centre of the revival—must, in fact, "become the parish home where men and women may be helped to more abundant life." Proposals follow for brightening parish churches with good reproductions of good pictures and statues of saints, while priests are urged to invite to "a real homely Parish Mass" those villagers who are conspicuous for friendliness and helpfulness.

It would be easy to cavil at particular points in this thesis. For example, I doubt whether it is true to say that everybody has a need of religion. "A man bears beliefs," said Emerson, "as a tree bears apples," but then he had not read *Puzzled People*, a mass observation report recently reviewed in this journal, from which it appears that the great mass of people accept no creed of any kind, and do not trouble themselves about religion one way or the other. But even if we were to postulate an unspecified need to believe in general, this would not, it is obvious, justify any belief in particular. Again, there is danger, too, in stressing the importance of the mystical element in religion; mystery-accepting all too easily becomes mystery-mongering. Selden notes that "there was never a merry world since the fairies left dancing and the parson left conjuring," from which it is but a short step to the notion of religion as the great *illusion* of the people.

Mr. Dark does not, he says, believe in the so-called decline of Christian morals. On the contrary he believes that people are on the whole getting better—" there has been a clear, if intermittent, progress from cruelty to kindness, from injustice to justice." I do not think that a police court magistrate, a probation officer, or an unofficial abortionist, would bear out the notion of an improvement of Christian morals, let alone the history of Europe during the past twenty-five years. But whether what I believe to be a decline is a fact or not—and Mr. Dark and I are too old a pair of hands to start arguing points of fact—I cannot avoid pointing out that Mr. Dark quotes with approval Sir Richard Livingstone's warning that " those who reject Christian beliefs cannot count on keeping Christian morals," and concurs in the view that there has been a widespread abandonment of Christian beliefs. Nor is anybody likely to be taken in by his attempt to save both morals and consistency by the ingenious device of first giving marks to humanism and rationalism for retaining a scrupulous adhesion to moral principles, and then proceeding to explain that they, together with the civilisation they have helped to create, are themselves the offspring of the Christian Church in the sense that they have inherited the code of morals which Christianity devised.

The real criticism of Mr. Dark's book is, however, on the score of sectarianism. Ostensibly he attacks sectarianism. Sectarianism is Protestant ; Sectarianism is un-English, the English are not interested in inter-denominational disputes and so on. Nevertheless his own book is explicitly designed to advocate Catholicism and the Catholic point of view. But what *is* the Catholic point of view ? The only indications I can obtain from the book are on the side of behaviour, an advocacy of pubs and fellowship and, on the intellectual, a hatred of sabbatarianism expressing itself in the demand for a Continental Sunday. I find it difficult to deny myself the pleasure of asking Mr. Dark first why it is that, if puritanism is essentially alien to the English, it should have been the dominating form of religion in this country for upwards of three centuries ; and, secondly, what ground he has for supposing that the advocacy of one particular brand of Christian doctrine, practice and ritual, even when offered to us under the label of " Catholic," should bring about the revival of the Christian religion—which he expects and desires. The truth—let us be frank about it—is that he doesn't know, and that nobody else knows, *how* the belief in the Christian religion is to be revived.

C. E. M. JOAD

THE PIT AND THE BALCONY

Unknown War. By RICCARDO LUZZATTO. *The New Europe Publishing Co.* 5s.

Empty Balcony. By PIERO SAPORITI. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

News value is relative. It was Italy's misfortune that the end of the Italian campaign and the consequent lifting of the security black-out on the story of her Resistance coincided with the end of the war in Europe. To this day comparatively little is known in England of the Italian people's struggle against Fascism. Recent publication of several books based on personal experience—such as Ian Reid's *Prisoners at Large* and Tillman's *When Men and Mountains Meet*—and the presentation in London of the film *Open City* should do much to remedy this want. Now come two books, written by Italians, which reflect further aspects of the overthrow of Fascism.

Riccardo Luzzatto is a socialist and a sincere friend of Britain. He left Italy in 1939 and worked for part of the war in the Italian section of the B.B.C. In *Unknown War* he attempts to present the full story of the sacrifice and heroism of the Italian people. At the same time the book is "a reproach, gentle and tolerant, to those British leaders who lacked his own faith in democracy and who thereby prolonged the Italian campaign and increased its casualties." (I quote from the preface by Vernon Bartlett.)

" Was it possible to win a greater advantage from the collapse of Fascism ? " This is the question which Luzzatto poses and there seems little doubt that the answer is in the affirmative. The weakness of Allied intelligence regarding the true state of affairs within Italy during the summer of 1943 led to two psychological blunders : contemporaneously with urging the new Badoglio government to drive the Germans out of Italy we rained bombs (instead of tommy-guns) on the industrial cities of the north ; and we insisted, throughout the armistice negotiations, on " unconditional surrender." Mussolini was later to make capital propaganda out of these blunders in his book *The Year of the Stick and the Carrot* (published early in 1944). Luzzatto gives interesting information on the strikes of March 1943 and on the part played by anti-fascist Italians in France. He is, however, at fault in saying (page 86) that up to February 1945 Britain had done nothing for the great number of Italians who gave assistance to our escaped prisoners of war. A unit was formed specially for this purpose in June 1944.

Unfortunately the ambitious theme of *Unknown War* is dimmed by a jumbled presentation of the material, which consists largely of extracts from communiqués, speeches, press reports and clandestine leaflets. Furthermore, more reliable sources of information have become available since the book was completed in the summer of 1945. While the impression created is thus somewhat unconvincing and not worthy of the subject, there can be no doubt of the fervid sincerity of the author.

Piero Saporiti once had close links with the Fascist Party and was, perhaps, fortunate to spend most of the war as a foreign correspondent outside Italy. In *Empty Balcony*, a dispassionate account of the last two years in the life of Mussolini, he has relied for his facts principally on the diaries of Grandi, Bottai, Ciano and Mussolini. Time alone will reveal how far their accounts tally with the truth. The book opens with a description of the plot which culminated in the overthrow of Mussolini at the meeting of the Grand Council on July 24th, 1943. Thereafter Saporiti traces the " progressive deterioration " in the character of the Duce, reduced to a seedy, shrunken marionette dancing on the strings of history. We see him frightened and humble as Badoglio's prisoner ; vindictive in the background of the Verona trial. We leave him hanging by his feet alongside his mistress in the Piazzale Loreto at Milan. Referring to Badoglio's government Saporiti says :

> Such little shoulders pushed him (Mussolini) over ! Men who had not the remotest idea what they wanted, no policy, no plan, but only hated him.

What he fails to suggest is that there were at this time other elements (those of whom Luzzatto writes) who had both a policy and a plan ; and that the tragedy lay in the King's and Badoglio's failure to incorporate these elements in their government.

However, Saporiti recognises the Tolstoyan nature of the causes underlying the events he describes and concludes :

> This tale has not dealt with the Italian people. . . . Had it not been for them, and the knowledge of their unspoken but compelling and final judgment, no palace revolution could have ousted Mussolini and sent him to his doom.

Empty Balcony is an interesting compilation of the last antics of a fallen dictator. But they should be viewed against the canvas of the Italian people's *Unknown War*.

JOHN MILLER

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THE INVISIBLE ART

The Dark Tower, and Other Radio Scripts. By LOUIS MACNEICE. *Faber.* 8*s.* 6d.

There are good reasons and obvious why a radio script should be more readable than a stage play; yet it is only in recent years that writers have made any serious attempt to collect and publish them. Until a considerable and diverse body of work in this form exists to be consulted, radio as an art will continue to be ignored or despised by many of those best qualified to exercise it. Mr. MacNeice is at the top of a difficult tree and his new collection of radio scripts fully displays the variety and brilliance of his gift.

With the possible exception of *Sunbeams in his Hat*, which is about Chehov, all these plays are moralities. Since that word has a glum sound, I hasten to add that at least three of them are extremely amusing. The fourth, *The Dark Tower*, is, I think, the most exciting and imaginative piece of original radio I have ever heard; but as I have written about it at length on past occasions, I will only add here that it is well worth reading for the sake of the eloquence and poetic beauty of the language. Eloquence, indeed, is the most striking quality of Mr. MacNeice's dialogue: even at its funniest and most colloquial, the speech coruscates. In his preface he states firmly that, whatever else a radio play sets out to do, it must entertain. I heartily agree, and even those who are by way of being irritated or perplexed by the harlequin antics in which Mr. MacNeice indulges with such evident gusto, can scarcely accuse him of being dull. Coax a person into a theatre and he will think twice before walking out, even if your play does sag. Bore a listener for two consecutive minutes and snap goes the switch. So, from the fading-up of the microphone, these plays exploit every known contrivance whereby attention can be caught and held. The traditional narrator, who is almost certain to be fatal, is replaced, in all these scripts, by clever use of one or other of the characters, who gives necessary information by unobtrusive methods while getting on with the action. Here, for example, is the "lead-in" of *The Nosebag*, a Russian fable which blends humour and pathos very adroitly:

> *Soldier.* Damn the sergeant! Damn the officer! Damn the Colonel! Damn the General! Who do they think they are to do such a thing to me? After twenty-five years of service. Out on my neck and the wind is cold and the steppes are wide and the years are empty. A discharged soldier that nobody wants . . .

That is not (you notice) typical stage speech. Apart from the fact that it is monologue, the style is midway between the novel and the epic—a style that has been created to meet the needs of a new art.

I wish Mr. MacNeice had included his two adaptations of Apuleius—*The Golden Ass* and *Cupid and Psyche*—in this volume, for not only were they among his best scripts but they would read better than the March Hare programmes. These are brilliant enough in their way, but depend on so much more than the words—songs, music, sound effects, comic voices, surprising transitions—that the scripts alone make a scrappy and rather confused impression.

The only other criticisms I have to make are incidental. (1) It is an error to suppose that the Dog in *The Witch of Edmonton* "must be silly on the stage." Anyone who saw Mr. Hedley Briggs in the part will not have forgotten the sinister and compelling magic with which he invested it. (2) The music at the end of *The Dark Tower* does not come to a "full close": on the contrary, it ends on an unresolved chord (a dominant seventh—Benjamin Britten's invention, one must suppose), which rightly, and most ingeniously, leaves the listener expectant. The moral of the play is that Roland's quest never properly ends, but has to be taken up afresh by each succeeding generation; hence the suspended chord . . .

Mr. MacNeice has been at pains to put the studio and panel directions into non-technical terms, thus making the scripts even smoother and more easily intelligible to the general reader. He has also added brief introductions and explanatory notes, which should interest habitual listeners to radio drama. Both kinds of reader will, I think, enjoy the dry wine of this poet's humour, his most uncommon sense, and the thread of beauty with which these are so cunningly interwoven. Like Ben Jonson, Mr. MacNeice is a satirist who loves the virtues of his fellow-men more than he hates their follies.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE ARTIST AS CRITIC

A Free House! Or the Artist as Craftsman. Being the Writings of Walter Richard Sickert. Edited by OSBERT SITWELL. *Macmillan.* 25*s.*

The art critic who cannot paint, or dabbles in water-colours on Sunday, has no alternative but to adopt some idea about painting and stick to it. If he is a clever man, he evolves the idea, after painful years, for himself; if stupid, he can take over the current jargon. In both cases, to camouflage his lack of technical equipment and his uncertainty about the way the mind of the painter works, he must pin his specimen down like a butterfly with typed labels giving dates of birth and death, spiritual ancestry, and status in an aesthetic hierarchy. This is the fate from which Sickert, along with many other painters, struggled for release: and when he too turned his attention to criticism, he was merciful enough to allow his wayward specimens a certain freedom to flutter. He never forgot that he was dealing with human beings as passionate and capricious as himself, and his experience taught him how the painter was subject to changes of mood, how the hand could falter. Bound by no doctrine, he could show himself with complete sincerity wild and inconsistent in his judgments. This book is an anthology of his critical opinions over a period of more than twenty years, but the inconsistencies cannot be explained away, nor should be, on the grounds that his essays form a series of disconnected jottings. He could be carping and magnanimous, perverse and prophetic within the paragraphs of a single essay, and always the authentic personality peeps through. This is the essence of genius.

As an artist of established reputation, settled in a robust tradition, he took an impish delight in frowning on those compelling fashions which the earnest, uncertain critic could not afford to ignore. He left himself free to be enthusiastic about pictures generally considered in poor taste, if they proved of use to him in his own work. Even the academic banality of Poynter, the dingiest lithograph picked up in the Kings Road, might serve some hidden purpose. Lautrec and Matisse had nothing to teach him, and so, when the Post-Impressionists flooded London with light, Sickert sprang to the defence of Keene. The great importance he attached to the subject-matter of painting when illustration was thought to be of no consequence, kept his writing almost free from period flavour; and his instinctive mistrust of politeness, above all a sense of fervent irresolution, preserved his youth and liveliness. At times of course the habit of paradox led him into nonsense, but at times, taking a leap at truth, he would describe his own sensations in the act of drawing, in passages of transparent prose; or would perceive merit or superficiality where others of sharper critical acumen had remained blind. This is what happened when

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he described the art criticism of Ruskin as "of the highest relevance and importance . . . his insistence on deliberation, on concentration, at each separate stage, set out with a torrential wealth of illustration, will never be bettered or supplanted"; or a work by Vlaminck, painted in a style so much extolled by the followers of Roger Fry, where he found "rectangular strips, gradations which assume in a sky, as in Cézanne, a disconcerting suddenness, as of a blot of ink on a page; only there are no accords, there is no observed and subtle variety, there is no travail, no sweat and no groans"—words which his idol Pissarro might have written in a letter to Lucien, had he survived a few years longer.

For what had Sickert, painter of the murky side-street and the music-hall, to learn from Fauves and Cubists? By the time he took to criticism he was already well advanced into middle age, and his style of painting was set on an independent, more earthy course. He could not write sympathetically about pictures unless they contributed to his painting, nor had he any need to divert his course to embrace the "isms" of the twentieth century. So he started knocking them down like ninepins, trusting that in time they would get forgotten. Whilst others, more cultivated, more ignorant, took too many tips from the right tipsters with their eyes shut, Sickert fought a lonely battle against impossible odds, with his eyes glued on the enemy.

BENEDICT NICOLSON

MEXICO

Mexican Kaleidoscope. By NORMAN WRIGHT. *Heinemann.* 15*s.*

"For me," says Mr. Norman Wright, "such sounds as the gobbling of turkeys, the slapping of maize paste, the very insistent honking of motor-horns, and the rather melancholy Spanish of the *mestizo*, will always call to mind Mexico City." He then travels by mule far into the mountains of Oaxaca and to Tiburon Island where the inhabitants are exclusively Indian. Of these remote districts, as previously of the City, Mr. Wright gives a vivid and informative account—the black-haired women, the Yalalag textiles, the silver crosses, the poverty and dignity of the people. There follow chapters on archaeology, natural history, and art. The photographs which accompany the text are well chosen.

Mr. Salvador de Madariaga in a recent book rather exaggerated the Spanishness of Latin America. Mr. Wright brings into prominence the Indian quality of Mexico. It is indeed remarkable that the Indians, vanquished in the Conquest and constantly suppressed thereafter, should still possess sufficient vitality and creative force to stamp their personality on a modern state and inspire its artists, musicians, and dramatists in such a degree that the only authentic Mexican culture to-day is that impregnated with the Indian quality. Mr. Wright—after dealing with Colonial architecture and folk art—gives his impressions of Siquieros and Rivera:

> The more poignant paintings have a social moral to convey, a social abuse to expose, or a social reform to encourage, and their composition is of necessity tumultuous, disquieting, crowded and alive. The treatment has to be vigorous and compelling. Symbolism, innuendo and satire abound in a kaleidoscopic setting of death, corruption, bureaucracy, the oppressed masses, agriculture, industry, literary and illiteracy, dishonest opulence and honest penury.

The medium for this kind of art is the mural fresco. Mr. Wright, as so often in the book, links the present to the past:

> Apart from the obvious efficacy of this medium for its object, it is noteworthy that two earlier precedents in Mexico are really being followed—the Indians of the pre-Hispanic period adorned the walls of their religious monuments either with paintings or with sculptured pictures, and later, in seventeenth-century Colonial Mexico, a taste developed for colossal religious oil paintings on the walls of monastery and convent cloisters.

It will be seen that the author expresses himself clearly and briefly. He also has a sense of humour, and reports several illuminating conversations, such as:

> "And how long have you been married, Señora?"
>
> Anna replied that she had been married three years.
>
> "And has your husband never beaten you?"
>
> Anna replied, quite seriously, that Stefan had never beaten her.
>
> "Then you are very lucky. You never know with men! And doesn't he get drunk, either?"
>
> "Nor does he get drunk," replied Anna.
>
> "Then," said the Señora gravely, "you should give thanks to God for his protection up till now. But there is still much time."

Mexican Kaleidoscope is a valuable addition to the already large number of books written by Englishmen on Mexico. It is full of information, and of brisk, sensible opinion. It gives an accurate impression of the country. The author with regrettable dexterity avoids any direct treatment of the major problems of the day: Labour, Oil, and Church.

Mr. Wright was military attaché to the Mexican Government during the war. I cannot imagine what his official duties can have been, but his time certainly was not wasted. The Mexican authorities are to be congratulated on the freedom which they evidently allowed him in his friendly investigation of the life of their country.

GEORGE PENDLE

A Gil Blas in California. By ALEXANDRE DUMAS. Transl. MARGUERITE WIBUR. *Hammond.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Dumas put his signature to 277 books, a number of which were factory-produced by "ghosts." The one now appearing for the first time in English is a travel book about a part of the world he had never visited, and was finished in eight days—an achievement when one considers that it is almost as long as an average novel. The book is cast in an autobiographical form and describes the activities of a young man who goes to California (then almost unknown) in search of gold, and though the setting was unexplored by Dumas, it is very well described and seems authentic.

There has been some speculation as to where Dumas got the material. In actual fact there is little in the book which could not have been discovered in a library or taken from Dumas's own experiences in France. The voyage in the 500-ton ship must have been like many journeys the author took locally, and the major incidents of the voyage—a man falling overboard, sea-sickness and the reactions to it of the women, food difficulties, storms, and visiting a foreign port (which comes across hazily)—would be nothing of an effort to describe for so imaginative and prolific a romancer as Dumas. For the rest, there are two chapters—obvious padding—devoted to the history of the American war with Mexico, over a hundred years ago, which are presented in an easily readable style like that used by Wells in his *Short History of*

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BLACKWELL

the World. Even when the hero gets to the gold mines and starts washing for the precious commodity, there is little that could not have been found in a *Larousse Illustré* of the period. However, the book makes interesting light reading, and the style seems curiously modern when compared with, say, Balzac, who was writing at the same period. But that may be due to the excellent translation.

Week-end Competitions

No. 915

Set by Thomas Smallbones

A prize of six guineas is offered for a letter to the Minister of Labour from a "spiv", "eel", "butterfly", or "drone" defending his (or her) way of life. (200 words). Entries by Sept. 16.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 912

Set by Roger Marvell

Six guineas for sixteen lines about Bishop Blougram in the style of Tennyson or about Prince Consort in the style of Browning.

Report by Roger Marvell

Browning is incomparably easier to imitate than Tennyson. Pithecus and D. H. were among those who did well in both, the latter, alas ! in writing I could not entirely decipher. J. B. C. Date, Allan M. Laing, Leslie Johnson and Terence Melican sent good Brownings. I award three guineas to L. E. J. for a dazzling "right and left", a guinea and a half to T. St. George, half a guinea each to A. M. Oliver, William Bliss and L. D. Lerner.

His ring takes fire beside his plate ;
The goblet winks ; the gross lips purse,
And in a thousand lines of verse
A Faith unfaithful vindicate,

And tell how from the world he stole
The gauds of appetite and zest
To furnish out with second-best
The empty cabin of his soul,

Unheeding that unshuttered square
Of casement, where the night-moths tap,
And half-awoken breezes lap
The rose in summer-scented air,

And ink-black ilex blots the Lawn,
And hint of primrose pales the sky
Where Venus sees the night go by
And with her lantern signals Dawn.

I was the lad the Queen swore by,
Whiskered, Macassar-oiled—her man,
Picked, plucked, selected, the one she set store by,
Mattered it I was a German ?
Haute-école, aye—but the fox-hunters grunted
Muttering—what ?—as they tore by.

I was the man the Queen leant on,
Tapping the Cabinet boxes,
Palmerston-proof and sagacious I went on
Moulding her—they and their foxes !

Now I'm The Good, and Victoria'll
Write, underlining, to Ponsonby,
Wondering—womanish, piqued, dictatorial—
What sort will *our* number one son be ?
Whilst I, misunderstood, golden, forgotten am
High on the Albert Memorial ! L. E. J.

You, my friend, with your notions of princes : the Borgian ;
The Macchiavellian ; Cromwellian ; Four-Georgian,
Here's one (see this daub) that's no fellow for trappings and tinselling.
That hand on his manikin princeling
Comes fresh from the day's memoranda ; moves shortly to mate
The Queen's chess-piece, or strum at the liveliest rate
That Mendelssohn Scherzo, which sets all the children to dancing.
And yet, if a Raphael could alter
This smooth thing, the Winterhalter,
Even he could not put back, forsooth,
What I'll wager had never been there—the man's youth.
Can you wonder that, as the work grew,
(So much done ; so much more still to do)
He looked for his Rosenau at Osborne (who'd blame the romancing ?)
And saw, through the stag-haunted birchwood, the pines and the laurel,
His own Feste Coburg—that Grimm's-tale affair—in the stones of Balmoral ? T. St. George

To Gigadibs the man of God
Proffered the foaming grape of France,
And then the dialectic dance
Of faith unfaithful featly trod.

"'Tis better to believe and doubt
Than never to believe at all ;
For, if the cabin be too small,
The captain casts the kickshaws out."

So ran his talk : who could forget ?
"We have but faith, we cannot know."
(It was the time when lilies blow,—
I see the wealthy bishop yet !)

Like one bemused in mountain mist
His hearer marking him, revealed
Some weariness, but nothing sealed
The lips of that Evangelist. A. M. Oliver

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"Man's a strange creature.—What did Goethe say ?—
'To wish to be remembered' . . .
I would choose

A simple Statue in some London Park
Where I should sit in quiet through the years
And watch the Nursemaids flirting as they pass
And hear the Sparrows twittering all day long. . . .
But She will rear some Gothic Monument
Or monstrous Hall of Music that shall leave
My name a bye-word. . . .
I am dying—come !

Edward, my son, more mine than hers I feel,—
If you survive her, promise me—ah ! no
She still will have her way, Britannia's Queen !
And I lie dying.—Have I ever lived ?—
Coburg tops Hanover !—a younger son,
Not even Coburg ?—I loved England well—
'Britannia's Consort.'—I have paid the price."
William Bliss

So all night long they talked, until the dawn
Tipped the mild hills with silver, and the Sun
Purpled the crimson wine in Blougram's glass.
Endless the questions Gigadibs revolved,
Of God, and faith, and doubt. The Bishop stood
And many thoughts rehearsed : Of newborn love,
The bliss of a first kiss on quivering lips,
Or of the many-jewelled, deep-pathos'd poet,
Growling his bitter beautiful abuse ?
Of doubts returning like the winter snows,
And God's deep purpose moving over all.
So spake he ; and with head erect and still,
Slow moving, stately, like some sable swan
That glides among the rushes undisturbed,
The butler poured the wine. And Gigadibs
Had never seen a costlier dinner-set. L. D. Lerner

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Appointments Vacant

UNIVERSITY College Leicester, Professorship of Mathematics. The Council invites applics. for appointment to the chair in Mathematics. Salary £1,200 p.a., with participation in F.S.S.U. and in the College Family Allowances Scheme. Partics. may be obtained from the Registrar, to whom applics. should be forwarded by Oct. 18, 1947.

UNIVERSITY College of Swansea. Council of the College invites applics. for post of Temporary Assistant Lecturer in Mathematics, for one year from Oct. 1. Sal. £500. Further partics. re post from Registrar, University College, Singleton Park, Swansea, by whom applics. must be recd. as soon as possible.

UNIVERSITY College of S. Wales and Monmouthshire. The Council of the College invites applics. for post of Assistant Lecturer in Philosophy, initial salary £450 p.a. Six copies of application and testimonials (which need not be printed) must be received by Louis S. Thomas, Registrar, Cathays Park, Cardiff, from whom further partics. may be obtained by Mon. November 3, 1947.

UNIVERSITY College of Swansea. Applics. invited for post of full-time resident extramural Tutor under Ministry of Education Adult Educ. Regulations. Commencing sal. will be £450 p.a. Appointment will date from Oct. 1, 1947. Further partics. from Registrar, University College, Singleton Park, Swansea, by whom applics. must be received on/before Sept. 15, 1947.

L.C.C. Applics. invited for appointment as psychologist in Education Officer's department. The duties of the position are associated (I) with standing conferences in each of the nine educational administrative divisions of the county on children presenting problems of educability and behaviour and (II) with child guidance clinics and centres for psychological examination and psychiatric treatment of children as recommended by those conferences and such other duties as may be reqd. Duties set out above must of necessity bring the psychologist into the whole range of the Council's educational system; since he must be concerned not only with the personal aspect of the problem child, but with the many features and processes of the educational system and their influence on the social and educational adjustments of children. He must be an educationalist with the widest possible exp. and interest as well as a psychologist. Person appointed will work in association with the consultant and whole-time psychiatrists in the Public Health department. Sal.: £1,000 × £50—£1,300 p.a. In special circumstances a candidate may be appointed at a comm. salary above minimum of the scale. Applic. forms (stamped add. foolscap envelopes necessary) may be obtained from Educ. Officer (Estab. 2) County Hall, S.E.1, and should be returned by Sept. 27, 1947. Canvassing disqualifies. (2778.)

L.C.C. Physiotherapist (woman) (full or part-time) reqd. at Sutton emergency hospital, Brighton Rd. Sutton, Surrey. Salary (full-time) £340 rising to £400 p.a. Part-time salary pro-rata plus 10%. Comm. salary according to exp. Must be regd. with Chartered Socy. of Physiotherapy. Apply to Physician Superintendent at the hospital. (2797).

A LEADING daily newspaper in India has opening for experienced man, aged 25 to 35, with all-round knowledge of photographic and colour work to take charge of Process Department; ability to control staff essential. Selected candidate will be reqd. to enter into a four-year contract on a salary of Rs. 900/- per mensem in first year, plus standard dearness allowance, which at present is 30 per cent. of salary, plus overseas allowance of Rs. 250/- per mensem. Increments of Rs. 50/- (on monthly salary) p.a. for 2nd, 3rd and 4th years of appointment. Post offers good prospects and carries with it liberal Provident Fund benefits. Steamer passage provided from U.K. to India on joining and also furlough and passage to U.K. on completion of contract. Applicants should state date of birth, full details of qualifics. and exp., including present employment. Box 8977.

A LEADING commercial organization in India invites applics. from young qualified Chartered Accountants to fill a senior Executive vacancy. Selected candidate will be reqd. to enter into a four-year contract on a salary of Rs. 1,000/- per mensem in first year, plus standard dearness allowance which at present is 30 per cent. of salary, plus overseas allowance of Rs. 250/- per mensem. Annual increments. Post offers good prospects and carries with it liberal Provident Fund benefits. First-class steamer passages provided. Applics. stating date of birth, full details of qualifics. and exp., including present employment. to Box 8978.

WORKERS' Educational Assocn. Berks, Bucks and Oxon District. Applics. invited for post of Organizer for Buckinghamshire. Person appointed will be reqd. to live in Slough, to develop adult educational work, and to promote and strengthen organization of Workers' Educational Assocn. Salary £400 p.a. Forms of applic. from District Secretary, W.E.A., Rewley House, Wellington Square, Oxford, to whom they must be returned by Sept. 30.

GRADUATE Teacher reqd., non-resident, near Newcastle/Tyne, small priv. school, very good sal., part-time could be arranged, Physics main subj., pref. to higher certificate. Box 8886.

OWING to expansion, wanted end Sept. for Progressive Prep. School, N. Scotland: (1) Art and Handwork Teacher; (2) Temporary Classics Master for 1 term only; (3) Maths. Master, able take other subjs.; (4) Matron, S.R.N. Apply Headmaster, Wester Elchies, Craigellachie, Strathspey.

Appointments Vacant—continued

SUDAN Government. The Education Department, Sudan Govt., reqs. Mistresses, age 25-33, for service in the Sudan, to teach in Girls' Training College, or Girls' Intermediate School, Omdurman, to organise syllabuses, and inspect girls' elementary schools. One of the successful candidates may be reqd. to take up duties as Principal of a small Teacher Training College in a rural area. Candidates should possess Univ. Degrees in Arts or Science and/or specialisation in Domestic Science, Handwork, Welfare Work or Hygiene. Teaching diploma and exp. are desirable, also exp. in girls' clubs, Guides or Youth Movement work. The annuity scale of post is £E.432-480-528-576-624-672-726-780-834 (biennial increases) and one triennial increase to £E.894. The starting rate would be determined according to age, qualifics. and exp. Appointment on Probationary Contract for annuity terms; where annuity terms would be unsuitable, appointment may be on Provident Fund contract, in which case annuity scale would be increased by about 17%. A cost of living allowance at rate of 45% of pay, subject to a max. of £E.225 p.a. is payable. An outfit allowance of £E.60 is payable on appointment provided starting salary does not exceed £E.600 Annuity, £E.700 Provident Fund. After first tour annual leave is granted with assisted passage allowance. (£E.1 = £1 0s. 6d.). At present there is no income tax in the Sudan. Free passage on appointment. Strict medical examination. Papers containing further information for candidates are obtainable from Sudan Agent in London, Wellington House, Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1. Please mark envelopes "Mistress."

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SHUTE School, nr. Axminster, Devon. Needed in September an Art Master or Mistress one afternoon weekly.

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YOUNG lady reqd. to act as Secretary/Personal Assistant to Principal of large firm of general merchants with offices estab. in Aden. Sound knowledge of French is necessary together with efficient shorthand-typing. Applicants must be willing to reside in Aden after preliminary period at London office. Excel. prospects for right person. Write, stating age, educ., exp., etc. Box 8848.

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Appointments Vacant—continued

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